

Testimony of Donna Morande, President
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Public Health Committee
February 16, 2016

HB 5129 An Act Concerning the Administration of Vaccines by Pharmacists and Medical Assistants and the Listing of Certified Medical Assistants

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Donna Morande, President of University Health Professionals (UHP), AFT Local 3837, representing 2,500 professional non-faculty employees at the University of Connecticut Health Center, including certified medical assistants. I am here to testify in opposition to HB 5129.

This bill would allow medical assistants to administer vaccines under the supervision of a physician or advanced practice registered nurse and would require that they receive training and written instructions provided by such medical professional.

Medical assistants perform important ancillary functions in hospital and outpatient settings. But they do not possess the assessment skills that nurses or physicians have honed in their years of training and delivery of patient care. Their training does not prepare them to administer vaccines. While I appreciate that the bill requires that they be supervised, there is no enforcement mechanism to be certain that medical assistants will not be acting independently.

In addition, training required by this bill is haphazard at best. There are no uniform standards or content required. A doctor could scribble bullet points on a prescription pad, provide a thorough hands on training seminar or offer any manner of instruction between those two extremes. It creates circumstances where disparate experiences will surely develop, thereby guaranteeing varying patient experiences.

There is no emergent reason why medical assistants should be permitted to administer vaccines. In the name of patient safety, I urge you to reject this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.