

Testimony Regarding the Governor's Budget Recommendation on
Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
February 19, 2016
Submitted by Jennifer Kertanis, Advocacy Chair of the
Connecticut Association of Directors of Health

It is my pleasure to offer this testimony on Governor's House Bill 5044, *An Act Making Adjustment to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017*. My name is Jennifer Kertanis, Advocacy Chair of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) and Director of Health of the Farmington Valley Health District, serving the towns of Avon, Barkhamsted, Canton, Colebrook, East Granby, Farmington, Granby, Hartland, New Hartford and Simsbury. CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut's local health departments and districts. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and are critical providers of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut.

CADH is a formal partner in the Commission on Aging's ongoing, statewide livable communities initiative. Livable communities are places that foster independence across the lifespan—and recognize the critical role of placemaking in promoting health. In collaboration with the Commission, CADH continues its important work of formalizing urban planning and public health partnerships to ensure that health implications are considered in housing, zoning and transportation-related decisions. Health outcomes across the lifespan, but especially for older adults, are profoundly influenced by access to affordable housing in safe neighborhoods that promote opportunities for healthful eating and active living. In short, community conditions are critical to promoting health.

The Commission has taken a lead in creating resources and tools for local health directors and other leaders in municipal government that shape places that support health. They also provide direct consultative support to towns. For example, the Commission has provided guidance and technical assistance to the Town of Barkhamsted, one of the towns my Health District serves, with the goal of ensuring that the town's evolving local plan of conservation and development explicitly takes health considerations into account.

And the Commission's work on livable communities is only but one example of the wide-ranging, aging-related issues on which they provide important policy leadership. Their steadfast attention to falls prevention, comprehensive policy strategies to address elder abuse in Connecticut, and statewide monitoring of activities to address hoarding are all illustrative of the

critically important public health issues they address, grounded in thorough, thoughtful and objective research. I urge your continued support of the Commission on Aging's efforts to promote the health of Connecticut's older adults. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this testimony.