



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the General Law Committee

March 7, 2016

**Commissioner Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.
860-509-7101**

Senate Bill #353 - An Act Concerning Opioid Abuse

The Department of Public Health is supportive of section 2 of Senate Bill 353, An Act Concerning Opioid Abuse. This section removes statutory restrictions on the settings in which an acupuncturist can practice auricular acupuncture under the supervision of a licensed physician for the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse. The current statute restricts the performance of this treatment to a facility licensed by the Department or operated by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. However, the practice act for acupuncturists does not dictate where acupuncture services can or cannot be performed. Therefore, the Department supports this change to expand the availability of this treatment modality and sees no conflict with the scope of practice for acupuncturists.

The Department appreciates the intention of and rationale behind sections 3 and 4 of this bill. However, there is nothing that currently prohibits the type of professional relationship between a prescriber and a licensed drug and alcohol counselor as described in this bill. Therefore, the language seems unnecessary. Furthermore, there are a number of other licensed mental health professionals that might just as appropriately work with a physician who is prescribing opioids. None of these potential professional relationships would require a statutory change.

The Department respectfully requests that the language in Section 2(h) be changed to say that the Department “may” adopt regulations rather than “shall” adopt regulations. The Department feels that the proposed language is sufficient to enforce the statute.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this bill.

*Phone: (860) 509-7269,
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE, P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
An Equal Opportunity Employer*