



**Connecticut Department of Public Health**

**Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee**

**March 7, 2016**

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

**Senate Bill No. 355 - An Act Concerning Local Health Districts**

The Department of Public Health (DPH) opposes Senate Bill No. 355. This bill requires the Commissioner of Public Health to audit, at least once every three (3) years beginning on or before October 1, 2017, each local (municipal and district) health department's records to assess its performance and to determine whether each local health director has complied with his or her duties.

This proposal will have a significant fiscal impact on DPH. Connecticut has seventy-three (73) local health departments (municipal and district). The DPH Office of Local Health Administration, which administers per capita grants and coordinates with local health departments to fulfill essential public health responsibilities statewide, currently has two (2) professional and one (1) clerical staff. DPH cannot perform the work contemplated by this proposal with its current staff. To complete the work contemplated by this proposal, DPH requires five (5) additional staff as follows: two (2) Environmental Sanitarians; (2) Epidemiologists; and one (1) clerical support staff.

In addition, this proposal creates an assessment mechanism without providing a remedy provision. DPH does not supervise or license directors of health. Directors of health are not State of Connecticut Employees. Similarly, DPH does not have the authority to oversee local health departments and their employees in an employer-employee manner. Instead, each municipality and district must oversee its respective public health employees. This proposal requires DPH to assess local and district health departments' performance and compliance with applicable duty requirements but does not provide DPH with a means to address any findings of such assessments.

Since the Department cannot accommodate the work contemplated by this proposal without adding the appropriate staff, which would result in a significant unbudgeted cost, DPH cannot support this proposed bill.

Thank you for considering DPH's views on this bill.

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