Good Morning: Representative Steinberg, Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Srinivasan and esteemed members of the Committee on Public Health. I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses’ Association (CNA). I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association.

I speak in support of PROPOSED BILL NO. 5754 AN ACT ALLOWING THE REGIONALIZATION OF CERTAIN HEALTH SERVICES with recommendations.

The current health care system faces many growing challenges’. One of the major issues faced by States is the growing cost of “Health Care” or should we call it “Illness Care”. If we call the elephant in the room “Illness Care” it is easy to recognize the growing cost of care. Many driving forces/ factors pushing for change, they are related to a changing demographic, multiple
epidemiological factors ie. aging and chronicity, changes in clinical practice and technology and the impact on health systems related to policy changes.

The goal in this State should be to establish a Public Health System that provides the regions with “Seamless Proactive Health Care, Case Management and Education, which is essential to improving patient outcomes.

However before the State moves forward with a mandated system that may not service the needs of the regions involved and may not produce the desired result we may want to conduct a program review and investigation that answers the following questions.

Why is the change necessary?
How will the needs of the population be advanced?
What Clinical pathways will meet patient’s future needs?
What delivery models are needed to support optimal care?
Are proposed changes affordable and feasible?

I believe we need to develop a case for change, a) what are the quality and productivity issues, b) what are patient access issues, c) what variations are due to the current model, primary care and/or hospital based care, d) is the system integrated, does it provide seamless, proactive case management, which is essential to improve patient outcomes with chronic disease?

Patients need the right services at the right time and at the right place.
They also need the right providers. Nowhere in any of the language I have
read is the essential need for Individuals in these newly conceived arenas with the proper credentials. **WE need to have qualified providers ie. Physicians, APRNs, Registered Nurses, and ancillary providers across all the Public Health Regions that are educated and trained to organize and deliver population health and public health services in each region. Without the proper knowledge base any system built is doomed for failure. With a properly prepared cohort of providers this integrated system has the potential to be economically sound.**

**General Pros and Cons** Regionalizing population and public health services offers the following benefit: **Consistency and equity**: the promotion of a consistent standard of care and equal level of services service. **Regionalization provides for a breadth of services** and facilitates the ability to can equip each local health department to deliver the range of services their specific community requires. **Regionalization provides the best of the best** it allows communities to access the skills they need, when they need them (even if those skills are not resident within their own health department). **Regionalization provides economies of scale**. Regionalization has been shown to offer economies of scale for communities who band together. Regionalization offers **flexibility**, **Local jurisdictions** can choose from different models to ensure the best fit for their unique circumstances. Regionalization offers **access to funding**; larger districts have greater capacity to apply for grants and are more competitive in grant applications, potentially bringing additional resources to their communities. Regionalization offers, **workforce development**, **facilitates, sharing resources, greater cooperation and communication, and more standardized training, will yield a stronger and better prepared local public health workforce.**
It is my recommendation that before we move forward with change that the proper research is analyzed and a sound proposal is brought forward that incorporates the key issues and recommendation discussed in an attempt to create quality Regional Health Care System utilizing the Principles of Population and Public Health, with qualified providers in order to achieve the goals established in a fiscally responsible manner. The entire process starts with the process of appropriate education and a properly established regional health care teams. Utilizing a system that is interdisciplinary and focused on safe, quality outcomes for patients across the lifespan in our communities.

Therefore I urge you to support of PROPOSED BILL NO. 5754 AN ACT
ALLOWING THE REGIONALIZATION OF CERTAIN HEALTH SERVICES

Thank you
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