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Testimony

Proposed Bill No. 126 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

Public Health Committee

February 10, 2017

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. 126 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.**

However, we believe that before an attempt is made to define the roles and responsibilities of the community health worker we need to establish a working committee of community health experts who are qualified and representative of all the stakeholders involved in our Communities who have the potential of being affected by this legislation. This working group needs to:

- 1) Define the role of the Community Health Worker
- 2) Examine Qualifications'
- 3) Examine National Curriculums
- 4) National certifications

- 5) Evidence Based Research that supports the role
- 6) Define the Role, Responsibility and Preparation for the Role
- 7) Make recommendations to the Public Health Committee

The literature abounds with articles related to Community Health Workers. Many states already utilize Community Health Workers and have recognized organizations that work with Community Health Workers.

Before Connecticut moves forward we need to clearly define the role, the educational needs, preparation and place within a complex community health care system and we must do this with the current provider groups/organizations.

The CDC defines: A community health worker (CHW) is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member or has a particularly good understanding of the community served. A CHW serves as a liaison between health and social services and the community to facilitate access to services and to improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

But this is not a standard definition across all states. In order to implement this proposed legislation we need to utilize the Community experts to define the roles, role expectations, educational requirements, and regulations.

Thank you for considering our suggestions in support of **Proposed Bill No. 126 AN ACT**

CONCERNING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.

**Mary Jane M Williams PhD, RN
Chair of Government Relations
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