

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF DAY KIMBALL HEALTHCARE
SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2018**

**SB 164, An Act Raising the Legal Age to Purchase Tobacco To Twenty-One
HB 5289, An Act Concerning The Department of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Expanding
The Clean Indoor Air Act**

Good afternoon. Day Kimball Healthcare appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning **SB 164, An Act Raising The Legal Age To Purchase Tobacco To Twenty-One, and HB 5289, An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Expanding The Clean Indoor Air Act. Day Kimball Healthcare supports these important bills.**

Before commenting on the bills, it's important to point out that Day Kimball Healthcare, a nonprofit community healthcare system, is the major provider of high quality, comprehensive healthcare services for the approximately 100,000 residents of northeast Connecticut. We provide this care to everyone in the communities we serve, regardless of ability to pay; and in our area, those covered by Medicare and Medicaid make up about 64% of the patient population.

SB 164 would raise the legal age to buy tobacco from 18 to 21. We know that the best way to reduce health-associated harm caused by smoking is to abstain from smoking or, at a minimum, delay the start of smoking. That's why Day Kimball Healthcare regularly provides outreach at local schools to give students and young adults a first-hand view of how smoking destroys the lungs (through the use of lifelike models of a smoker's and non-smoker's lungs) as well as education by a registered respiratory therapist about the many ways that smoking negatively impacts health and quality of life.

If passed into law, Connecticut would join other states and cities that have increased the age to purchase tobacco. Currently, an individual must be 21 to purchase tobacco in California, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, Oregon, New York City, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Portland (Maine), Albany (New York), and the two Kansas Cities (Missouri and Kansas).

HB 5289 would expand Connecticut's Clean Indoor Air Act by adding to the number workplaces and locations required to be smoke-free. Additionally, HB 5289 would eliminate several exemptions to the Clean Indoor Air Act passed in 2003. We believe this to be another significant step for reducing the incidence of smoking in our state. We have instituted these measures for patients and staff in our own facilities, and have worked with employers in our area to help them do the same, and have seen very positive results. All of Day Kimball Healthcare's campuses (including all outside areas) became smoke-free in 2010 to protect patients, visitors and staff from second-hand smoke and to encourage healthy lifestyles. As part of that process, Day Kimball offered smoking cessation programs to our staff as well as the general public. Since then, we have provided hundreds of hours of no-cost smoking cessation programming to other local employers and the community at large, and even hosted a launch event with Quinebaug Valley Community College when their campus went smoke-free in 2016.

Connecticut first implemented its Clean Indoor Air Act in 2003. The passage of the 2003 Clean Indoor Air Act has helped to educate the public on the dangers of smoking-and the associated negative impact of secondhand smoke. However, lung cancer is still the leading cause of cancer death in our state and around the nation. While other environmental factors like naturally occurring radon can also cause lung cancer, smoking is the cause of 80% of lung cancer deaths. Windham County (our service area) has the highest rate of smoking in Connecticut, at about 15.6% of the population. That's why we're working hard to educate our community through outreach and to provide no-cost help and support to those who want to quit. It's also why we invested in becoming a Designated Lung Cancer Screening Center in 2016, by offering low-dose CT lung cancer screening to provide the earliest

detection possible for this awful disease, thereby providing our patients diagnosed with lung cancer with a better chance at a longer life. But as glad as we are to be able to offer this screening to our community, we would much prefer that smoking prevention and cessation measures make the need for this screening less and less.

For these reasons, Day Kimball Healthcare urges the committee to pass the Department of Public Health's recommendations to expand the Clean Indoor Air Act and to increase the legal age to purchase tobacco to 21 to protect and enhance the health and well-being of Connecticut's residents and visitors.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact Day Kimball Healthcare President and CEO Anne Diamond at (860) 928-6541.