



**Marcus McKinney, Regional VP of Community Health, Chief Health Equity Officer and Director of Curtis D. Robinson Center for Health Equity
Trinity Health Of New England
BEFORE THE
THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Monday March 20, 2018**

**SB164 An Act Raising the Legal Age to Purchase Tobacco to Twenty-One and HB5289
An Act Concerning The Department of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding
Expanding The Clean Indoor Air Act**

Good afternoon. Trinity Health Of New England appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB164 - An Act Raising the Legal Age to Purchase Tobacco to Twenty- One and HB5289 - An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Expanding the Clean Indoor Air Act**. By way of background, Trinity Health Of New England includes Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and Mt. Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital in Hartford, Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford Springs, and Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. In addition, our ministry includes physician practices, an ambulatory services network, home health and post- acute care services. We are more than 13,000 health care providers committed to providing compassionate care and improving the health of our community. Trinity Health provides more than 265,000 emergency department visits, 40,000 surgeries and 5,000 births annually.

As Vice President Regional Vice President of Community Health, Chief Health Equity Officer and Director of Curtis D. Robinson Center for Health Equity, we know that the best way to reduce health-related harm caused by smoking is to abstain from smoking or at least delay the start of smoking. I know that you have heard all of the arguments before but cigarette smoking still is the leading cause of preventable death- causing 480,000 deaths each year and costing \$170billion in medical expenses. We strongly believe that raising the minimum age to 21 will save lives- and saving lives is our core business.

Trinity Health Of New England has been actively engaged throughout our ministry to support raising the age to purchase tobacco products to 21 nationally, known as “Tobacco 21”. 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, Albany and the two Kansas cities- Missouri and Kansas). Why shouldn't Connecticut be part of this movement and let us join our colleagues in Springfield, Massachusetts who recently adopted a Tobacco 21 ordinance on a citywide level.

In addition, we support HB5289 which would expand Connecticut's Clean Indoor Air Act as recommended by the Department of Public Health.

Thank you for consideration of our position. For additional information, feel free to contact me directly at 860-805-5971.