



CONNECTICUT TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Raised Bill 464

Public Hearing: 3-20-2018

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TO: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
FROM: CONNECTICUT TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (CTLA)
DATE: March 20, 2018
RE: **OPPOSITION TO SB464 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A
WORKING GROUP TO ENHANCE PHYSICIAN
RECRUITMENT IN THE STATE**

The stated purpose of Raised Bill No. 464 is to “enhance physician recruitment in the state.” Or stated in the alternative, the hypothesis is that public is suffering from a shortage of physicians and this is a problem that must be addressed.

The data does not support the claim. Raised Bill No. 464 is a solution in search of a problem. There is no evidence that Connecticut has a problem with scarcity of physicians .. To the contrary, Connecticut is better-served in terms of physicians per capita and patient access to medical care than most states.

As of 2016, there were 12,341 active physicians in Connecticut, up from 2012 when the total was 11,949. In 2016 there were 345.1 active physicians per 100,000 people in the state. Connecticut was ranked 6th out of all 50 states for highest per capita number of active physicians. By comparison, the median number for states was 257.6 active physicians per 100,000 people.

Research compiled by the Kaiser Family Foundation showed that as of 2014, Connecticut ranked 8th for adults who had a personal doctor and 90% of residents had a “usual place” for medical care.

Physicians in Connecticut are well compensated. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Connecticut ranked 11th in 2016 for highest median and mean salaries for healthcare practitioners and technical occupations. And as a percentage of the total workforce, Connecticut’s healthcare workers are ranked 18th.

Raised Bill No. 464 seeks to examine the manner in which so-called “defensive medicine” impacts physician recruitment in Connecticut. In the past, this term has been utilized to advocate for changes to the medical liability system in Connecticut. We encourage this Public Health Committee to consider risk that this bill poses to the balance that was laboriously achieved in 2005.

Since that reform effort, the pattern has been clear. The number of medical malpractice payments each year has dropped and was lower than each of the years from 1996 to 2006. Since its high in 2003, the number of annual payments for medical malpractice claims has dropped by more than 50%. Claims have dropped as well. Indeed, a state-by-state comparison by Becker’s Hospital Review ranked Connecticut 38th on a list of number of malpractice suits per capita.

Since 2005 malpractice insurance rates have declined. Malpractice insurers have returned to the state and are achieving record profits. Hospitals have entered in the medical malpractice arena.

This is not the time to entertain a study bill for a problem that does not exist at the risk of disturbing a balance that has been achieved.

WE RESPECTFULLY URGE YOU TO DEFEAT RAISED BILL 464. Thank you.