

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 6540**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF HIV**

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To the distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

I respectfully submit the following testimony in support of H.B. 6540, *An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV*.

As an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse working with adolescents since 1990, I wholeheartedly support H.B. 6540.

CT statutes already recognize the need for confidentiality for the detection and treatment of sexually transmitted infections in minors. We live in a society where sexuality is not easily discussed in families, and adolescents who fear rejection, anger, or worse from parents or guardians may not access necessary health care. This leads to delayed detection and treatment, causing more morbidity to the patient, allows for more spread of the disease, and leads to more costs to society.

In my work I have seen firsthand how shame prevents adolescents from making healthy choices, along with fear of retribution. The fear of others learning about their sexuality leads some adolescents to deny their sexual activity to health care providers, therefore increasing their risk of contracting STIs including HIV.

We must, as a society, help adolescents obtain confidential non-judgmental treatment and be able to prescribe PrEP to prevent contracting HIV, a virus for which there is still no cure.

We can add a preventative, safe, very effective medication to stop the spread of HIV. In many situations parents will be intimately involved in their children's care. In some cases, the adolescent may know that involving the parent is not, today, beneficial or safe.

Adolescents aged 15-17 may now be prescribed the medication— but they cannot independently consent to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a medication used to prevent HIV transmission in the first place. An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV would implement a targeted provision to address this harmful gap by adding language to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-592.

This bill will allow for patients aged 15 through 17 to commence a very safe prevention plan, possibly saving their lives.

Who can argue with that?

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