



Community Health Center Association of Connecticut

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Testimony of

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Supporting

HB 6540: An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV

Public Health Committee

February 25, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of House Bill 6540, An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV.

On behalf of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut (CHCACT), and its sixteen member federally-qualified health centers, I want to thank the Committee for raising this bill. As background, Connecticut's federally-qualified health centers serve almost 400,000 people each year, providing medical, behavioral health and dental care in over 100 locations across the state. CHCACT and several of Connecticut's health centers also administer federal Ryan White programs, to assist people living with and impacted by HIV and AIDS.

CHCACT asks for the Committee's support of this common-sense proposal.

This bill would update existing state law to help prevent the transmission of HIV among young people. While medical advancements have made HIV treatment widely available, one public health goal is to prevent new cases of HIV. Thankfully, with the availability of pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, we can do just that. PrEP is a pill that can work to keep HIV from establishing a permanent infection. As it is 92% effective of preventing HIV (when taken correctly), it can be a game changer for people at high risk of HIV exposure, either through sex or injection drug use.

Currently, minors may receive HIV treatment without parental consent – but they cannot independently consent to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). This bill would change that, so that minors can be proactive about their own health. Allowing minors to access PrEP also brings them into a health care environment that allows for counseling and other medical attention as appropriate.

CHCACT strongly supports the passage of this legislation. Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of Connecticut residents. Please feel free to reach out with any questions: dpolun@chcact.org or 860.667.7820.