



Community Health Center Association of Connecticut

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Testimony of

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Supporting

HB 7278: An Act Concerning Mobile Integrated Health Care
Public Health Committee
March 18, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 7278: An Act Concerning Mobile Integrated Health Care.

On behalf of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut (CHCACT), and its sixteen member community health centers, I want to thank the Committee for raising this bill. As background, Connecticut's health centers serve almost 400,000 people each year, providing medical, behavioral health and dental care in over 100 locations in communities across the state.

CHCACT supports this bill, which allows Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers to collaborate with community providers, provide care as appropriate, and divert certain patients from the hospital emergency rooms.

Over the course of the past several months, the Mobile Integrated Health Working Group, established by Public Act 17-146, has been meeting to discuss issues around the provision of integrated community-based health. CHCACT's representative on this Working Group, Jennifer Granger, is the President/CEO of United Community & Family Services (UCFS), a federally-qualified health center, which provides medical, dental and behavioral health care in several locations in southeastern Connecticut.

This bill would implement the recommendations of this working group. First, the bill would allow paramedics to provide community-based health care within their scope of practice. Additionally, the legislation allows for patients to be transported to a site other than a hospital emergency room, as appropriate.

The goal of this portion of the legislation is to get patients the right care, at the right place, at the right time. Many people who are in the community and face an urgent health care or behavioral health care need do not need the level of care provided in an emergency room. However, EMS providers currently do not have the flexibility to make this determination. Providing care in an alternate location will save the patient and the health care system money and is often more convenient.

CHCACT recommends amending the language of the proposal to specifically include community health centers as alternative destinations, which was recommended by the Working Group.

I ask that you please support this bill with the recommended change, which is another step in the right direction for health care in Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of Connecticut. Please feel free to reach out with any questions: dpolun@chcact.org or 860.667.7820.