



**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee**

**Public Hearing**

**February 13, 2020**

**Testimony**

**By**

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**Dean, School of Nursing**

**H.B. No. 5014 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TAX CREDIT FOR PROVIDERS OF CLINICAL NURSING EXPERIENCES**

Thank you, members of the Committee, for this opportunity to present testimony on a matter of significant importance to the health of Connecticut residents – ensuring the sustainability of the nursing workforce in our state. I also thank you for your ongoing support of UConn, and its School of Nursing. I am Dr. Deborah Chyun, a registered nurse, and the Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Connecticut. It is an honor to be here.

UConn School of Nursing, founded in 1942, is located on the main campus in Storrs, Connecticut, with educational programming provided there, as well as at the three regional campuses – Waterbury, Avery Point and Stamford. Home to 800 students in five programs - traditional 4-year bachelor's; 1-year accelerated certificate entry into nursing (bachelor's) program for individuals with a bachelor's degree in another field; master of nursing science; doctor of nursing practice; and doctor of philosophy - the school is responsible for preparing a significant number of nurses who are dedicated to meeting the health care needs of the state.

Significant shortages of nurses at all levels – baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral, are projected over the next 5 years. In fact, according to the American Nurses Association, the shortage already exists. The need is great. Yet, in the academic setting – where the preparation, training, and education of the next generation of nurses occurs, we are significantly limited in our ability to produce new practitioners by a lack of preceptors – those already professionally licensed, who provide supervision and oversight to developing nurses and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). Each semester we require at least 80 preceptors to work with our APRN students. These preceptors include community- and hospital based APRNs, physician assistants, and physicians across the state. When preceptors are asked why they stop taking on students, they answer that taking a student results in a financial loss. Today, practicing clinicians are forced to see more patients than ever before, and many report that supervising a student slows them down, decreasing their productivity.

As a result, some colleges and universities resort to paying preceptors directly to clinicians to offset this loss in revenue. This is not the best solution. So-called “bidding wars” are emerging, where if one program offers an incentive of \$500 to precept a student, another program will respond by offering \$750, or \$1,000, or more. These costs are ultimately passed along to the students, who can least afford to pay. At the University of Connecticut, the flagship public university in Connecticut, we cannot pass these costs on to students as other universities often do to pay preceptors. As a result, since we are committed to placing every student with a preceptor, we are forced to turn away qualified applicants every year. This year we will turn away 50 APRN applicants because of a lack of preceptors. In turn, this limits the number of nurses who can obtain both master’s and doctoral degrees and eventually teach, further perpetuating the nursing shortage.

There is a better way. The bill before you, HB 5014, AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TAX CREDIT FOR PROVIDERS OF CLINICAL NURSING EXPERIENCES, is a solution to this problem. This bill, if passed, would create a tax credit incentive to physicians, physician assistants and APRNs who agree to serve as preceptors for the next generation of health care providers. It is a much more equitable solution to the problem than paying for preceptors. Tax credits are already the law in Hawaii, Maryland, Colorado, and Georgia.

We urge the Connecticut General Assembly to pass this bill into law, supporting those clinicians who serve to supervise our nursing students at the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral levels, ensuring that the next generation of nurses and APRNs is sufficient to meet the needs of Connecticut’s citizens.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

#### References

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