

# Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1537

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING  
**Title:** GROUP TO STUDY NONALCOHOLIC FATTY LIVER DISEASE.

**Vote Date:** 3/27/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

**PH Date:** 3/24/2025

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

The Public Health Committee.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to complete the following:

- Create and administer a program to promote liver health by increasing public awareness of and education regarding metabolic dysfunction-associated steatosis liver disease (MASLD) and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH).
- Develop a plan to provide mobile noninvasive assessment of liver fibrosis in various clinical settings and mobile clinics in high-risk communities in the state.
- Develop and implement a 5-2-1-0 Let's Go Campaign emphasizing the following be done each day:
  1. Consume five or more fruits and vegetables.
  2. Two hours or less of screen time.
  3. One or more hour of physical activity.
  4. Zero sugary drinks.

The bill also requires the Governor to proclaim each April 19<sup>th</sup> as Connecticut Liver Health Day to further raise awareness of this condition.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Manisha Juthani, MD, Commissioner, DPH:**

While DPH is supportive of all efforts to increase public awareness of Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease, for the department to successfully establish and implement a program for any of the proposed activities outlined in this bill would require significant financial and staff

resources that are not included in the Governor's proposed budget. Therefore, we cannot support this bill as written.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

##### **Bubu Banini, MD, Research Director of the Metabolic Health and Weight Management Program, Yale School of Medicine:**

Dr. Banini Co-Chaired the multidisciplinary Working Group commissioned by the legislature that provided the recommendations proposed in this bill. Given the state's rates of obesity, diabetes, alcohol use, and other conditions that affect the liver, passage of this bill will have a substantial health impact through the promotion of liver health awareness and screening strategies to ultimately reduce the prevalence of liver disease and improve outcomes.

##### **Denise Dawson, MD, Assistant Professor of Social Work at Southern Connecticut State University:**

Dr. Dawson was a member of the Working Group to study MASH. She shared that the group identified key barriers, including the lack of a state-specific prevalence data, limited public awareness, and disparities in access to early diagnosis and treatment. In addition, socioeconomic inequities, food insecurity and insufficient access to health care contribute to the increased burden faced by marginalized communities. To mitigate these issues, Dr. Dawson urges the committee to implement the measures outlined in this bill.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Kathleen Panazza**

**Date: March 31, 2025**