

**TESTIMONY OF  
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DIRECTOR OF NURSING AND WORKFORCE INITIATIVES  
ON BEHALF OF CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
BEFORE THE  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, March 1, 2005**

**SB 1168, An Act Concerning Support for Schools of Nursing, Allied Health and Pharmacy  
SB 1050, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning  
Higher Education**

My name is Liz Beaudin and I am the Director of Nursing and Workforce Initiatives at the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA). I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of CHA and its members on **SB 1168, An Act Concerning Support for Schools of Nursing, Allied Health and Pharmacy.**

SB 1168 calls for the Board of Governors of Higher Education to establish a scholarship and loan forgiveness program to attract and retain new faculty members for Connecticut's schools of nursing, pharmacy and allied health. These programs, developed in consultation with the Commissioner of Public Health, State Board of Examiners for Nursing, and Commission of Pharmacy, would provide scholarships to support individuals to become faculty members, and loan forgiveness to individuals that serve as qualified faculty members within the fields of nursing, pharmacy or allied health for a period of five years.

CHA supports the provisions of SB 1168 and believes that their enactment would assist in addressing current and future faculty shortages that are barriers to creating an adequate healthcare workforce. As the state with the seventh oldest population in the nation, Connecticut's demand for healthcare services is high and expected to grow significantly. It is critical to begin to build the pipeline of qualified healthcare workers now in order to avoid a devastating crisis in care going forward. To do this, there needs to be a sufficient number of faculty members to prepare the future healthcare workforce.

A 55 percent shortfall between supply and demand of registered nurses is projected for Connecticut by the year 2020. While national and local efforts to inform the public about the nursing shortage and to attract potential students into the field have been reasonably successful, there are inadequate faculty resources to accommodate a burgeoning number of applicants. It is indeed a sad circumstance when there is a desperate need for nurses in the nation and thousands of qualified applicants are turned away from nursing school doors because of faculty shortage and other capacity issues. The National League for Nursing reported that 125,000 qualified applicants were turned away from all levels of registered nursing programs in the nation in the year 2004. Over 36,000 of these were applicants to baccalaureate programs who would have

been further down the pipeline toward the masters and doctoral degrees that could prepare them as future faculty members.

Although nursing programs in Connecticut have expanded enrollment and worked hard to maximize faculty resources, there have been lost opportunities to prepare registered nurses for the future because of faculty shortages. Last year one thousand twenty-nine qualified applicants were turned away from Connecticut's nursing schools due to faculty shortage and capacity issues. This is preliminary information from a report that will soon be released by the Connecticut League for Nursing.

Of equal concern are workforce and faculty shortages in the allied health professions and pharmacy. Unlike nursing, these fields have received little attention despite growing practitioner shortages, enrollment declines, expected significant loss of faculty through retirement, and increasing demand for healthcare services. Recent national efforts have begun to increase applicant pools to some degree, but the average age of full time professors in programs such as pharmacy, radiography, clinical laboratory science, occupational and physical therapy is well over 50 and large numbers of faculty retirements are anticipated. Other sources of faculty losses in addition to retirement are also a concern in maintaining adequate resources to prepare healthcare practitioners for the future. For example, the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education reported significant losses of pharmacy faculty to the pharmaceutical industry, to hospitals and to government agencies.

An important aspect of addressing the healthcare workforce shortage is the attraction and support of qualified individuals who will be the teachers of future healthcare practitioners. The provision of scholarships to support entry into teaching, and loan forgiveness incentives for teacher retention will encourage critically needed healthcare faculty development.

We are pleased that the Governor's budget provides for a Connecticut Loan Forgiveness program in section 9 of **SB 1050, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Higher Education**, and we respectfully recommend the additions of allied health and pharmacy to the "shortage subject" areas.

We also would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Senator Hartley, and to Representative Willis and the Committee for bringing attention and support to the critical issue of healthcare workforce shortages. Your support in advocating for the creation of a healthcare workforce database, the Allied Healthcare Workforce Policy Board, and, initiatives such as SB 1168 to address faculty shortages is greatly appreciated. As always, we stand ready to assist you in whatever ways we can to advance initiatives that will address the healthcare workforce shortage.

Thank you for your time and consideration.