



**TESTIMONY OF
DANIEL KEENAN
REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT
ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND
SUBMITTED PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Friday, March 6, 2020

**HB 5020, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget
Regarding Public Health**

Trinity Health Of New England strongly supports HB 5020, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Regarding Public Health.

Trinity Health Of New England includes Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital in Hartford, Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford Springs and Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. In addition, our ministry includes physician practices, an ambulatory services networks, home health and post-acute services. We are more than 13,000 health care providers committed to providing compassionate care and improving the health of our community. Trinity Health provides more than 265,000 emergency department visits, 40,000 surgeries and 5,000 births annually. We build a healthier Connecticut by improving community health, managing chronic illness, expanding access to primary care, preparing for emergencies, and addressing social determinants of health.

Trinity Health Of New England has always been a strong supporter of anti-tobacco legislation and has testified before you a number of times over the years. Just this week, Trinity Health President and CEO Mike Slubowski issued a statement reminding us that tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States and costs the U.S. health care system approximately \$170 billion each year. He went on to say that in 2019, 27.5 percent of high school students used e-cigarettes – a 135 percent increase from 2017. Research shows that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to become smokers. About 95 percent of adult smokers began smoking before they turned 21.

Trinity Health has prioritized reducing tobacco use across our 22-state health system through a commitment to tobacco screening and referral, connecting patients to cessation resources, and advocacy for anti-tobacco policies at the federal, state and local levels. Trinity Health's commitment to tobacco cessation is real. Examples of interventions across our footprint include quit hotlines, support programs, employing tobacco specialists and pharmacy supports.

By tackling the leading drivers of youth tobacco use, this bill will go a long way to deal with this public health crisis. Trinity Health supports this comprehensive approach to reduce tobacco use in Connecticut and throughout the country.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at dkeenan@trinity-health.org.