



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM DELPHIN-RITTMON, PH.D.
COMMISSIONER

Testimony of Miriam Delphin-Rittmon
Commissioner
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Good Morning Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill No. 1085 AN ACT CONCERNING SUICIDE PREVENTION.

DMHAS is a health care agency with responsibility for mental health promotion and substance use prevention across the lifespan. As part of this responsibility DMHAS serves as a co-chair of the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board (CTSAB), an extensive group of state and community stakeholders who focus on the prevention of suicide across the lifespan. The CTSAB collaboratively oversees the statewide suicide prevention infrastructure that has been developed over the past decade using national evidence-based guidance with technical assistance, training, and federal grants. CTSAB has active representation from the entities mentioned in this bill, as well as many other stakeholders. It is a dynamic group of people who are committed to suicide prevention. The CTSAB is an expansion of the Youth Suicide Advisory Board mandated in Connecticut State Statute. The group developed and uses the [CT Suicide Prevention Plans](#) to guide and implement state efforts and programs related to this issue. The CTSAB currently carries out the tasks outlined in Section 1 of this bill.

The bill requires an annual report to the legislature. DMHAS does not have resources to draft additional annual reports. DMHAS respectfully requests that the Committee consider submission of the CT Suicide Prevention Plan as updated periodically or for the information described in the bill to be included in the DMHAS Triennial Report in lieu of an annual report.

DMHAS would be happy to partner with the Committee on proposing substitute language that highlights a lifespan approach that includes references to the specific needs of youth, and accommodates the inclusive nature of the current membership on the CTSAB and its existing functioning framework.

Thank you for continuing to work to address behavioral health issues including suicide prevention in our state. DMHAS appreciates the opportunity to testify on this bill. If you have further questions please do not hesitate to reach out to Mary Kate Mason, DMHAS Director of Government Affairs at Mary.Mason@ct.gov.