

March 3, 2021

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Patricia Harrity and I am Executive Director of the Health360, home of Northwestern Connecticut Area Health Education Center (NWCTAHEC). NWCTAHEC is one of the 4 regional centers that makes up the CT AHEC Network with a program office at UConn Health. I am writing today to urge you to support funding in the Governor's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget for AHEC. I want to start by thanking you for all you do for the state of Connecticut and your past support of the Connecticut AHEC Network

The CT AHEC Network is part of a federally funded initiative which is based at UConn Health and is implemented through four regional centers located in the Willimantic, Hartford, Waterbury, and Shelton. The four centers enable the CT AHEC Network to carry out local programs with great efficiency. As a statewide program, it provides high quality, efficient, effective and flexible services that meet local needs. CT AHEC Network assures that residents have access to critical resources and programs that are essential in developing a healthcare workforce which is cost effective, culturally competent, interprofessional and responsive to the healthcare needs of the state. Reducing or eliminating funds will negatively impact services offered locally, regionally, and statewide.

For the past 20 years the Connecticut AHEC Network has successfully leveraged collaborations and partnerships with key stakeholders with a focus on Connecticut's health care workforce. We have been dedicated and committed to reducing and eliminating health disparities by collaborating and creating partnerships with organizations that aim to improve healthcare access both on a national and statewide level.

AHEC's mission and goals directly support healthcare workforce development in the state:

- Developing and supporting community based inter-professional training opportunities for health professions and pre-health professions students.
- Recruiting underrepresented minority and disadvantaged students into the health professions.
- Partnering with community organizations to address local health issues.
- Providing continuing education that improves the care received by vulnerable populations.
- Providing outreach to underserved communities.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic the CT AHEC Network quickly mobilized health profession student where they were needed most including volunteering at testing and



Health 360, Inc.
83 Prospect St
Waterbury, CT 06702
203-758-1110
health360.org

immunization sites, providing outreach to isolated senior citizen locked out of their senior centers, and supporting youth who were forced to pivot to online learning.

I urge you to support funding for AHEC in the State of Connecticut now and in the future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Harrity", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patricia Harrity, MS

