

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5027

AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AT THE REGIONAL CAMPUSES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF

Title: CONNECTICUT.

Vote Date: 3/7/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/16/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The proposed legislation aims to require the University of Connecticut to create and maintain comprehensive student health services at their regional campuses, specifically providing treatment for prevalent physical ailments and resources for mental health referrals. This imperative is a direct response to the concerns expressed by both students and faculty at the University of Connecticut's regional campuses who have highlighted the lack of accessible healthcare services. The current absence of such services at the University of Connecticut's regional campus leaves student with no viable means of addressing their medical or mental health concerns, thereby posing a significant challenge to their well-being and academic success. The bill, if passed, will offer students at the regional campuses of the University of Connecticut an avenue to access critical health services that are vital to their overall health and success as students.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Suzanne Onorato, PhD, Executive Director, Student Health and Wellness and Annemarie Siefert, PhD, Campus Director, UConn Avery Point:](#) UCONN currently provides coordinated services for the students on the Storrs campus, providing access to a full continuum of medical and mental health services and preventative community health resources. These services are funded by a Student Health and Wellness university fee charged to matriculated graduate and undergraduate students enrolled on the Storrs campus. In 2017, UCONN funded the SHAW Mental Health Resource Center on each of the four regional campuses. In addition, in 2021, UCONN established the Task force for Regional Campus Access to Care

and Community Health to review and assess regional student medical and mental health care needs. UCONN supports expanding access to medical care and mental health services for students, however, are not in the position to take on this initiative without securing additional funding. UCONN stated one must be mindful of maintaining a level of affordability for students who attend regional campuses and look forward for continued discussion on this topic.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Connecticut General Assembly, 41st House District, Representative André Bumgarder:](#)

supports this bill because it would provide the Avery Point campus of the University of Connecticut with a student health center which would assist between 500-600 students who do not have a medical center to attend to their mental and physical health needs. It is also stated that Avery Point does not have a place for students to go to in times of urgent needs which is needed especially considering the stressful environment that school can have on a student.

[Connecticut General Assembly, 40th House District, Representative Christine Conley:](#)

supports this bill because of the importance having a medical health center at Avery Point would help student with their basic medical needs. Currently, if a student is not feeling well or just simply needs access to a band aid for a minor cut, there is nowhere for them to go resulting in missed classes and for students who are new to town and do not have a local doctor, when in need of medical care result to going to urgent care clinics or minute clinics for what could be a minor health issue.

[Kiersten, Student, Ledyard High School:](#) supports of this bill because long term stress increases the risks for mental health problems and health issues. Going to college can be a stressful time in an individual life, so services are needed on campus to ensure the well-being of the students.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

See agency response.

Reported by: Kelly Houston

Date: 3/15/2023