

# Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6733

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S  
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC

**Title:** HEALTH STATUTES.

**Vote Date:** 3/27/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/13/2023

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

The Public Health Committee.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill is at the request of the Department of Public Health (DPH) and lists several revisions to the Public Health statutes that the department would like to implement.

This bill will modify the definition of "assisted living services agency"; eliminate the requirement that applicants for a master social worker license pass the ASWB master level exam; limit the time period in which an esthetician or nail technician may be grandfathered for DPH licensure; codify the requirement for minimum vehicle and equipment for EMS vehicle inspections; create a new DPH licensure for source plasma donation centers and blood collection facilities; require psychologists and physicians who wish to participate in interstate compacts to submit to criminal history record checks; eliminate the requirement that a municipal health director have a public health degree; create a tax credit for a stillbirth; make certain changes to asbestos abatement requirements; specify that DPH has jurisdiction over all public water supply sources; rescind automatic reciprocal discipline against a health professional or pharmacist if the discipline was based solely on terminating a pregnancy if it did not violate state law or regulation; exempt eyebrow threading from the definition of "esthetics"; establishes a definition of "fetal death"; authorize certified ambulance services to provide non-emergency patient transport and treatment and finally, require the Chief Medical Examiner to be board-certified in forensic pathology.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Manisha Juthani, MD, Commissioner of the DPH:**

The Commissioner submitted testimony in support of the department's bill and thanked the Committee for its consideration of these requests. Her testimony explained in detail each section of the bill.

### **Representative Vincent Candelora, 86<sup>th</sup> District, CGA:**

Rep. Candelora has a concern regarding the process by which a vaccine is added to the state vaccine schedule. He specifically mentions the COVID-19 vaccine which was recently added to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) list of recommended vaccines for children but is not on the list for Connecticut. He points out that the authority given to the commissioner in section 19a-7f of our state statutes indicates that "The Commissioner of Public Health shall determine the standard of care for immunizations for the children of this state". However, it is unclear if there needs to be a revision in the regulations prior to adding a vaccine to the list. Rep. Candelora requests that the committee review these confusing statutes and provide language in this bill to clarify this point.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **The American Plasma Users Coalition (APLUS) membership:**

APLUS is a coalition of national patient organizations created to address the unique needs of patients with rare diseases who use life-saving plasma therapies created from source plasma. The passage of this legislation will align the requirements applicable to plasma centers and staff with federal standards and will result in the opening of more plasma donation centers.

### **Betsy Jett, Senior V.P., Quality and Regulatory Affairs, New York Blood Center (NYBC):**

NYBC supports the proposal to create a separate licensing pathway for blood donation facilities and source plasma centers. However, the most important thing that the state can do is to frame its statutes in a way that aligns with federal requirements now and into the future.

### **The following submitted testimony supporting that of NYBC:**

- Roger Brinser, BioLife Plasma Services
- Mark Becker, Grifols Plasma
- Lisa Butler, GBS/CIDP Foundation
- Matthew Prentice, Immune Deficiency Foundation
- Bill Spier, Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association
- Christine Price, Yale School of Medicine

### **Karen Burnaska, Water Projects Coordinator, Save the Sound:**

Save the Sound strongly supports Section 20 of the bill.

**Jeff Shaw, Senior Public Policy Advisor, The Alliance, Voice of Community Nonprofits:**

The Alliance supports Section 2 of the bill that would eliminate the requirement for clinical social workers to pass a national exam. The Alliance agrees that the current exam is not working as intended, and worse, is preventing newly qualified social workers from getting hired and filling desperately needed vacancies at many health and human service nonprofits.

**Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME):**

The OCME supports Sections 26-29 that makes the chief medical examiner a gender-neutral position and to require the chief examiner be board-certified in forensic pathology.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA):**

CHA opposes Section 7 that permits only the name of the EMS service operating the vehicle to be on the sides of the vehicle. This provision would require changes to ambulances already in service and does not disclose to patients all parties involved. CHA also requests that Section 14 of the bill be deleted. This provision would allow the DPH to change data and the method of data collection without input from the facility and without regard for the financial and staff resources necessary to complete the work.

**Kevin Ferrarotti, Senior System Director, Hartford Healthcare EMS Network:**

Mr. Ferrarotti points out two concerns that impede current work in the field of EMS. Specifically, Section 7 would be a significant cost to the EMS agencies to rebrand the sides of ambulances to comply. He understands that changes to the EMS system are necessary for its long-term viability. However, such changes need to address workforce recruitment and improved reimbursement. The language in Section 25 does not address these issues. It only offers additional burdens for the certified agencies to determine where they can use already strained resources.

**The following individuals submitted testimony supporting the same points as in the above:**

- Greg Allard, President, Association of CT Ambulance Providers.
- William Schietinger, American Medical Response.

**Elizabeth Garra, CT Water Works Association (CWWA):**

CWWA opposes provisions in Section 20 authorizing DPH to implement regulations which would circumvent the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act (UAPA) and permit regulations which have not been reviewed and approved by the legislature's Regulations and Review Committee. Also in Section 20, the CWWA opposes the DPH having jurisdiction over all matters concerning the purity and adequacy of any water supply source used to include any source "for which the right to use the water supply source for future or emergency use is held by a municipality".

**Colleen Murphy, Executive Director, Freedom of Information Commission (FOI):**

FOI is concerned about language in Section 22 regarding sodium chloride run-off. FOI believes this is overly broad and as such, could prohibit access to information that may be significant to the public, homeowners and prospective buyers.

**Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge CT:**

LeadingAge opposes the change proposed in Section 1 of this bill and specifically opposes the removal of the qualifying condition of being "chronic and stable" for the provision of assisted living services.

**Connecticut Assisted Living Association (CALA) submitted the same concern as LeadingAge in its testimony.**

**Cheryl Wilson, President, National Association of Social Workers (NASW):**

NASW opposes Section 2 which eliminates the requirement for passing a national exam to receive licensure as a master social worker.

**Stacey Hardy-Chandler, CEO of the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB):**

ASWB opposes Section 2 of the bill. The primary function of the exam is to protect the public and verify minimum competency of practice. Giving the commissioner of DPH discretion over some social workers not taking the exam would create differences among workers with the same "licensed" title and result in a bifurcated system.

**Jennifer Henkel, member of ASWB submitted testimony expressing the same opposition as Ms. Hardy-Chandler.**

**Reported by: Kathleen Panazza**

**Date: April 10, 2023**