

Association of School Nurses of Connecticut

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TESTIMONY RE: PROPOSED BILL NO. 6725, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
REPORTING OF STUDENT OBESITY DATA
Select Committee on Children Hearing

February 6, 2007

To: Senator Meyer, Representative McMahon and members of the Select Committee
on Children

From: The Association of School Nurses of Connecticut

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Association of School Nurses of Connecticut, the professional organization for school nurses in Connecticut regarding Proposed Bill No. 6725, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REPORTING OF STUDENT OBESITY DATA.

This bill would require school nurses to collect information and report to the local as well as the state health department without a clear plan related to acting on this information. What good will it do to collect this information if no one is acting on it?

Body Mass Index (BMI) numbers for children are only useful useless and informative when they are graphed for BMI for age. Just having a BMI number on a child does not provide the necessary information. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as children grow, their body fatness changes over the years. The interpretation of BMI depends on the child's age. Additionally, girls and boys differ in their body fatness as they mature. Therefore, we must plot the BMI for age according to sex-specific charts.

We are concerned that this is another unfunded mandate requiring school nurses to report information that someone else is gathering without specifics about how this data will be used to make a difference in children's lives. As school nurses have found with the asthma reporting, if doctors don't report the information they don't get accurate numbers.

Health assessments are required in preschool and kindergarten, grade 6 or 7 and grade 10 or 11. Except for the pre k and kindergarten physicals the subsequent ones are too late to be looking at this.

We would recommend that a pilot program in an urban, a suburban, and a rural school would be the most appropriate avenue before we look at doing this in the entire state.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and recommendations. We are available for information and consultation about this important issue.