



Association of School Nurses of Connecticut
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**TESTIMONY RE: RAISED BILL NO. 7350, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
PREVENTION OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

Education Committee Hearing

March 12, 2007

To: Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee

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 Raised Bill No. 7350, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY.

This bill's mandate would become the responsibility of school nurses to ensure that an assessment of Body Mass Index (BMI) is completed on all students in the sixth grade as well as collect the data and notify the parent or guardian of the results of this assessment. The following are our concerns:

- Without funding, computers and software, this is an impossible mandate.
- A health assessment by the student's primary health provider is already required for students in the sixth or seventh grade. This is where the responsibility for this assessment should take place.
- Body Mass Index (BMI) numbers for children are only useful 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.

- Just looking at a BMI in sixth grade is too late to prevent obesity in most students who are overweight.

We are concerned that this would be another unfunded mandate requiring schools to provide for an assessment that **if done in the sixth grade may or may not be useful** and if done should be part of an ongoing record that the student's primary health care provider would be maintaining. This data will not be making a difference in children's lives. 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 any additional assessments that are required be carefully evaluated by primary health care providers and the nurses in the schools that would be required to carry out the mandates. We will not solve the issues of childhood obesity without a multi-dimensional plan.

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