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**Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony in OPPOSITION to House Bill 6942
An Act Concerning Collaborative Arrangements Between
Physician Assistants and Physicians
Public Health Committee
February 4, 2019**

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), please accept this testimony in opposition to **House Bill 6942 An Act Concerning Collaborative Arrangements Between Physician Assistants and Physicians**.

Since the establishment of a scope of practice review process through Public Act 11-209, CSMS has now gladly participated in two committee processes related to the scope of Physician Assistants. The first in 2012 proposed legislation to drastically change current statutes to more appropriately allow physician assistants to practice to the fullest of their training and capabilities. With those changes put into statute the subsequent session, at that time, physician assistants agreed it appropriately accomplished its goal.

In 2018, yet another scope review was requested by physician assistants and accepted for review by the Department of Public Health (DPH). Once again, CSMS gladly participated as the proposal would not only significantly change the scope of practice for physician assistants but allow a level of independence **not seen in any state**. Furthermore, the structure of collaboration sought, we believe, contradicts the training and fundamentals of their practice in which they are “physician assistants,” as part of a patient-centered team.

The required report by DPH of the committee process was released last Friday, February 1st. While the report reflects the discussions of the committee as well as opinions and information from the participating groups, any observation or involvement in the discussion made clear that the current process regarding the delegation of duties to physician assistants is working and expanding their scope further is not appropriate.

Physician assistants are a valuable member of the healthcare team. They are well trained to deliver the services they provide. The expansion of their scope of practice, as noted above, has already granted them opportunity to practice to the top of their training. Since then, there has been no evidence that the training and education of physician assistants has changed commensurate with the degree of independence sought in this proposed legislation.

CSMS is concerned with the significance of this proposal and its potential impact on the healthcare delivery system. The training that Physician Assistants receive is not equivalent to

the extensive education physicians must undergo before entering practice. Patients already have a difficult time understanding the many layers of the health care system, and particularly the educational standards and degree of training that goes into producing each health care specialty. Those of you who have been on this committee know that transparency and the frequent lack thereof has been a continuing concern of this organization and many other medical specialty organizations. Allowing the collaboration conceived under House Bill 6942, which for all intents and purposes would allow independent practice, undermines this fundamental principle. It would put patients at risk when they unwittingly enter practices expecting the education, training and skill set of a physician, or at the very least, being seen by a physician assistant working under the supervision of a physician.

Physician assistants have a valuable role to play in health care. Their contributions are both respected and appreciated but given the absence of necessity and the lack of evidence to support increased scope we must ask you to oppose House Bill 6942.