



**Testimony in opposition of  
Proposed S.B. 117: An Act Concerning Community Benefit Plans**  
March 6, 2017

Submitted by: Tekisha Dwan Everette, PhD, Executive Director

I am writing to express support for Proposed S.B. 117: An Act Concerning Community Benefits Plans, which would require hospitals to include measures to address the social determinants of health in its community benefits plans. An important part of achieving health equity is addressing those factors outside of health care that prevent individuals from attaining optimal health – social determinants. Social determinants of health are those conditions that affect an individual's and a community's health status. They include: economic stability, the built and physical environment, educational access and attainment, housing access and quality, food access and security, social context and network, as well as overall health care system access and quality.<sup>i</sup>

The County Health Rankings notes that 50 percent of an individual's health is determined by socioeconomic factors and the physical environment.<sup>ii</sup> It is time we start to better align our resources and our efforts toward effectively addressing these influencers. SB 117 is a critical step in ensuring that hospitals are accountable to being a real part of the solution. Specifically, it is imperative that hospital community benefits:

- Directly align with and address the needs of the community as identified in a hospital's specific or regional Community Health Needs Assessment;
- Align with overall state goals to improve health and address the social determinants of health as outlined in State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), Healthy CT 2020, and any forthcoming analysis of state need;
- Clearly show a connection between dollars spent (output) and community needs addressed (outcome).

It is our position that community benefits should ultimately demonstrate a serious investment in changing the conditions that drive health inequities in the community the hospital serves. Health equity is achieved when every Connecticut resident is able to obtain their optimal health without barriers and without regard to race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. We have to align our systems to encourage equitable access and outcomes in health care and health. Requiring a serious community benefits investment to address the social determinants of health in a step in the right direction. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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ABOUT HEALTH EQUITY SOLUTIONS: Health Equity Solutions, a nonprofit organization committed to promoting policies, programs, and practices that result in equitable health care access, delivery, and outcomes for all people in Connecticut. Our vision is for every Connecticut resident to obtain optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. To achieve this vision, our state must align its systems to ensure we do not exclude or unduly harm the individuals and communities from obtaining optimal health.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://kff.org/disparities-policy/issue-brief/beyond-health-care-the-role-of-social-determinants-in-promoting-health-and-health-equity/>

<sup>ii</sup> [www.countyhealthrankings.com](http://www.countyhealthrankings.com)

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