

December 8, 2009

My name is Diane Johnson. I began my career in nursing after graduating from the Bullard-Haven LPN Program in 1971. After working in the state of Connecticut for 12 years as an LPN, I returned to school and became a Registered Nurse in 1985. Consequently, I was able to further my education and return to the LPN program as an instructor.

I am just one in a very significant number of nurses that have transitioned from LPN to RN to Masters prepared nurse and finally to nurse educator. I am grateful to the LPN program and dedicated to the mission and purpose that it continues to serve. I have run into many of my former LPN students that have also gone on to achieve their RN license.

It will not only be a travesty but an utter tragedy if our state run program is discontinued. I know that many of my colleagues have spent numerous hours and extensive efforts into revising our curriculum to make as seamless a transition as possible for many of our students/graduates. We put all of our knowledge and experience as nurses into educating and preparing the most competent and effective graduates as we are able. We possess the intuitiveness and expertise to know how to help the majority of students be successful and complete their studies with us. These individuals are the future basis of nurses for health care in this state.

The LPN program continues to serve a two-fold purpose: It produces the largest percentage of LPNs that are predominantly employed in the long term care setting and other areas such as clinics, physician offices, group homes and other non-acute areas. LPNs are the "backbone" in these areas of care, and are able to cover the licensed nursing duties under the direct supervision of a Registered Nurse Supervisor or Director. Who will fill this gap if we are shut down? The private sector offers programs that will cost approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000. This cost may not be feasible or possible for many individuals, thus dramatically decreasing the number of future LPNs. Secondly, our program provides a direct pathway for those interested in career mobility. The private sector schools are not providing this same opportunity in the way we have designed it.

My hope is that this decision to "suspend" the Connecticut LPN programs will be reconsidered. We need to keep it in place to meet the ongoing and future demands of nursing care in our state. Please consider the vital services that it provides in allowing that opportunity to begin at this entry level and advance in the profession. A large part of the nursing shortage is connected to the dire shortage of nursing instructors. If this program is closed, we may very well be depriving very capable individuals of that future opportunity to teach nursing.

Thank you.