

**Legislative Testimony**

**Proposed Bill #6646: An Act Concerning Medicaid Billing Practices for Federally Qualified Health Centers**

**Gerardo Sorkin, Director of Behavioral Health Outpatient Services, United Community and Family Services (UCFS) & Connecticut Primary Care Association (CPCA)**

Senator Harris, Representative Villano and Members of the Human Services Committee, good morning. My name is Gerardo Sorkin, I am the Director of Behavioral Health Outpatient Services for United Community and Family Services (UCFS) in Norwich. For this testimony I also represent the Connecticut Primary Care Association (CPCA), the organization that gathers Community Health Centers throughout the state of Connecticut.

I'd like to begin my remarks to you this morning by telling you a story about a young woman who had need of our outpatient services at our community health center in Norwich. This very young lady is a single working mother with two pre-school children ages 2 and 3. Due to the stresses of trying to maintain a full-time job, a home, childcare arrangements, and transportation difficulties, she is going through a period of considerable anxiety and depression. She makes an appointment to see a counselor to develop some coping strategies to face the challenges of daily living. In order for this appointment to happen, she needs to make childcare arrangements, take time off from work, and schedule a Medi-Cab to transport her to the Health Center in Norwich.

After overcoming all these barriers, she meets with a counselor, who carefully listened to her sufferings and concludes that she would also benefit from a psychiatric evaluation which might determine the need for antidepressant medication. The psychiatrist is two doors down the hall, and readily available to meet with her.

Sounds like a simple enough solution, but under our current system of Medicaid practices, we are being forced to schedule the psychiatric visit on another day. I don't need to tell you she will need to arrange childcare for the second time, she will need to schedule a Medi-Cab for the second time, and she will need to request time off from work for the second time.

The situation I just described is all too common for us to ignore. It equally affects someone trying to see a dentist and a hygienist in the same day, or schedule a visit to a primary care doctor and a specialist in the same day.

The current system challenges the fundamental idea of access to health care.

Therefore, we are today asking you to consider that title 17b of the general statutes be amended so that Federally Qualified Health Centers can be allowed to bill Medicaid recipients for more than one outpatient service per day.

Having the chance to present this testimony to you, on February 20<sup>th</sup>, which happens to be my birthday, is the best gift I could have imagined. I hope the results are as good as well.

Thank you very much and do not hesitate to contact UCFS or CPCA if you have questions or need additional information