

Testimony  
of  
Ludwig Spinelli  
Executive Director – Optimus Health Care, Bridgeport  
on  
SB 1127  
“An Act Concerning the Charter Oak Health  
Plan and Health Care Access”  
before the  
Human Services Committee

March 15, 2007

Good afternoon. My name is Ludwig Spinelli. I am the Chief Executive Officer of Optimus Healthcare; a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that provides medical, dental and mental health services to close to 32,000 patients at 10 sites in Bridgeport, Stratford and Stamford. I am here to speak in support of Bill No. 1127 concerning the Charter Oak Health Plan and Health Care Access.

Optimus Healthcare supports the Charter Oak Health Plan as an initiative to provide coverage and therefore access to health services for Connecticut residents who are uninsured for greater than six months many of whom are employed and many of whom come to our sites for care and do their best to pay for these services on our sliding fee scale.

As you know, FQHCs welcome all patients regardless of ability to pay. But many of the working poor in Connecticut and uninsured are reluctant to try to access services if they are unable to pay or may not be aware of their FQHC. FQHCs throughout Connecticut are ready and willing to participate in the outreach described in Bill No. 1127 in the interest of linking more patients with the care they need. The fact that there will be no pre-existing condition exclusion is important to FQHCs who see and treat the high incidence of chronic disease in the minority populations cared for by FQHCs.

It is hoped that physicians not participating in HUSKY A&B may elect to participate in the Charter Oak Plan, especially specialty care providers who

would provide the referral network that FQHCs desperately need for their patients.

The recent donation of dental equipment and the earlier donation of mammography equipment to FQHCs through the Department of Social Services and the Governor's Office enhances the ability of the FQHCs to provide preventive services and screenings. The prevention of dental disease and early detection of cancer which will yield untold dollar savings down the road that define "smart government."

The FQHCs in Connecticut look forward to participating in the task force outlined in Section 5 of the bill and suggest that all categories of providers of care can contribute to the work of the Task Force.

We applaud this effort to work toward greater access to services and stand ready to participate in this important initiative.