

**Public Health Committee
Public Hearing
March 5, 2007**

**Testimony of Michelle Hanlon, RN
Administrator, VITAS Innovative Hospice Care of Waterbury**

My name is Michelle Hanon. I am a registered nurse with over 15 years of experience in hospice care. I am here this morning to testify in support of Raised Bill No. 7193 which recognizes a state regulatory scheme for hospice-only providers in the State of Connecticut.

VITAS Innovative Hospice Care has been serving patients in Waterbury since 2004. We have provided hospice care to more than 770 patients throughout the area. Taking care of patients in our geographic area reflects a broad spectrum of patients who would not otherwise have hospice services, if not for our involvement.

Our values as an organization demand that we look at each individual patient as an opportunity to create an environment of caring for all patients appropriate for hospice services.

As part of our outreach in the community we serve, the Waterbury office has provided approximately \$510,000 in unfunded care over the last year.

Our program has grown as the people of Connecticut become aware of hospice and the expertise that our team demonstrates.

We care for patients according to the Federal mandated hospice guidelines, and our patients come to us with many different life limiting illnesses, including approximately 40% cancer diagnosis, as well as cardiac, dementia, lung disease and neurological diseases such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and ALS.

We applaud the Committee for giving time to hear from VITAS, as we continue to put so much effort into serving all people in the community, and reach out to those who may not otherwise receive end of life care. Are there any questions I can answer?