

Public Hearing Testimony
SB: 1052
February 21, 2007

Name: Patricia LeDuc
Address: 54 Reynolds Road., Danielson, CT.

My name is Patricia LeDuc, Site Manager of Generations Family Health Center in Danielson, Connecticut. I apologize for not being able to make it out there but appreciate being heard.

Please be advised of a problem our case managers Gayle Ethier and Tracy Lakotta experience on a daily basis which causes much frustration for our patients, providers and staff members. The problem is the need for transportation for our patients in order to provide them continuity of medical care.

For example, a major support for transportation in this area is our patients who may be unable to find transportation as needed when referred out to a specialist in Hartford. Many of the locations of these specialists that our patients need to see exceed the mileage allowed by the company contracting with the state. Therefore, our patients are forced to either find their own transportation (most often these specialty appointments outside our area are not kept) or seek medical care from a provider whom their primary care physician has not chosen. Our providers have submitted documentation as to why a patient may need to go to Yale New Haven, for example, and when documentation is given providing the clinical data and reasons as to why a particular specialist is preferred, someone at the transportation company is determining these patients should go to a provider closer. The main criteria in determining health care and preventative medicine in these situations should not be based on mileage.

Moreover, out of the approximate 2,500 patients seen in our Danielson office last year, 73% had either Medicaid or no insurance coverage. Since the insurance companies who cover our patients do not offer any transportation, our patients usually end up not showing up for appointments when referred out to specialists. This is very frustrating for the patient who is unable to carry out their responsibility for their medical care as well as the specialist who sets time aside to see our patients who are unable to show up typically due to transportation issues not to mention our providers and staff members who find out the patient (patients) never end up keeping the appointment which was scheduled. Consequently, the process of getting these patients another specialty appointment must begin again. Specialists in the Quiet Corner are

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hard to come by as it is for the uninsured. When patients continue to not show for their appointments, they are no longer able to obtain another appointment by these providers because of their no-show rate and end up having to go further away to obtain quality medical care.

In addition, patients on spenddowns that are insured by Medicaid have to find their own way to get to these providers. The State of Connecticut limits patients to only see providers in the state of Connecticut; therefore, if there is a specialist over the line in Massachusetts, which may be only 15 minutes up I-395, our patients are not allowed to go to the appointment and be covered.

Although we are grateful that limited transportation has been reinstated for SAGA patients, many patients with SAGA are still not allowed transportation services because it is just not in the state budget. These SAGA patients are the neediest population and although we are grateful that limited transportation has been reinstated, this population is still in need of transportation as well.

In closing, problems with transportation are a huge barrier for many of our patients. We support Senate Bill Number 1052 in the hopes that it will eliminate the hurdles that our patients must face in seeking quality medical care.

Sincerely,

The Staff Members of Generations Family Health Center
54 Reynold Street, Danielson, Connecticut