

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 7233
AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR CHILDREN WITH
SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS**

March 8, 2007

To Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Randi Pitruzzello and I am an occupational therapist who has been doing homecare for over 20 years. I am writing this letter to support Raised Bill No. 7233, which amends Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-216g to cover all children insured under the state's Medicaid plan, not just children covered under the HUSKY Plan, Part A.

Children who receive physical and occupational therapies are weaker in skill development than typical children. They demonstrate poor endurance and often require extended time to complete tasks. When a child is in school all day and performing tasks that are already difficult for them they are often very tired when they arrive home. When a child has to go to a daycare situation before going home, due to parents working, these children have increased their fatigue as well as they are often very hungry. This is not an ideal situation for therapy to occur. Therapy places demands on a child that are difficult for them already and adding in factors of fatigue and hunger do not provide an optimal therapy situation.

After working with children during all times of the day it is most optimal to treat when they are alert and not hungry. Since children often attend school during their most optimal time of day, the next best time would be immediately following school. Unfortunately not all children are able to be seen at this time due to work schedules of parents. If therapy is to be designed to help children achieve their best skill level, then working with the children when they are able to get the most out of therapy should be considered a priority.

Allowing the families of the most severely disabled children to receive coverage for occupational therapy outside of the home will make a significant difference in both the quality of the therapy, as well as improve the quality of lives for these families. Please support Raised Bill 7233.

Thank you

Randi Pitruzzello OTR/L
41 Lostbrook Drive
West Hartford, Connecticut 06117
(860) 232-2952