

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

**Testimony of Karen Brown  
Certified Nursing Assistant, VITAS Innovative Hospice Care**

My name is Karen Brown. I have been doing hands on care of the dying for over thirteen years, and 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. Following the Federal Medicare guidelines, VITAS Innovative Hospice Care is committed to helping individuals and their family with the struggles of daily living during a fragile time so that they can be as independent as possible and remain in their homes. I help patients to feel good about themselves, educate family and caregivers in personal care of someone who may be too fragile or weak to do their own care, and give an ear to them, sharing in the experience of dying. I go wherever the person lives, and give the same gentle caring to whomever our patient is. Hospice is different than home health because I get to do live enrichment activities, such as music, going to recreation, preparing a meal and sitting and chatting with them. It might be taking them outside to enjoy the sun, putting on fresh nail polish or a special hairdo. Walking around a building, listening to stories with someone does so much to bring specialness to the day of someone who may not have anyone else. Aides are that presence in the homes of the patients, at the bedside of those we serve tell that person they are not alone, that their lives matter. The message to our patients is that you are not alone, making sure that they know that they are cared for. Social isolation can be another part of the pain patients and their families experience when facing death. I am glad that you recognize the importance of caring for the dying patients, taking the time to let us talk. Please let me know if you have any questions. I would be pleased to respond.