

**TESTIMONY**  
**REGARDING S.B. 558**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF HOSPICE SERVICE**  
**UNDER THE MEDICAID PROGRAM**

March 4, 2008

Members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Cynthia Roy-Squitieri, MS, LCSW, Executive Director of Regional Hospice of Western Connecticut, an affiliate of Danbury Health Systems. On behalf of the hundreds of dying patients and families we serve each year, I urge the committee to support S.B. 558, for the availability of hospice services under the State of Connecticut's Medicaid Program.

The addition of the hospice benefit to Medicaid will provide vital services to patients who currently cannot access traditional hospice care. Patients like Mark age 42, whom we cared for last fall, worked as a nurse until last June. He was diagnosed with a rare form of Cancer and was physically unable to work. He spent most of his life savings paying for treatment and was unable to access traditional hospice services because there was no hospice benefit in CT for Medicaid. Mark's wish was that he not die in a nursing home but rather stay in his home with his children by his side. Regional Hospice provided his care through a generous donor who set up funds for patients who have no assistance. These kinds of "Special Patient Funds" are few and far between. Many Connecticut donors are perplexed why their donations are used for such purposes, when Medicaid should be provided to all.

This legislation will also allow hospices to provide care to Medicaid clients across all settings. If Mark needed to be admitted to the hospital or a skilled nursing facility, the Medicaid benefit would allow the hospice team to follow him and provide consistent support no matter which setting he was receiving care in at the time.

Mark's life was spent caring for others and he never thought that he would end up in this situation. This much needed Medicaid benefit will ensure that the most fragile and alone will be cared for in the place that they deserve to be...their home.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony.