

**Brenda J. Powers, R.N.**

**Testimony In Support of Bill Number 579**

My name is Brenda Powers and I reside in West Simsbury, Connecticut. I have been a registered nurse in Connecticut for the past 20 years. I worked many years as a medical/surgical nurse and witnessed the steady growth in resistance to antibiotics by Staphylococcus aureus and to the risk of experienced by hospital patients, and medical/surgical patients in particular.

Most recently my experience with HA-MRSA was a personal one, as my stepfather acquired the infection in the Fall 2007 while recovering from lung surgery. Although he was given Vancomycin, a strong antibiotic often used to fight MRSA infections, this antibiotic had no effect and my stepfather died.

There is no question that my stepfather acquired MRSA in the hospital. The question is: Are there ways in which hospitals can reduce the number of MRSA infections? In addition to infection control procedures utilized by hospitals that have a record of greatly reducing their rates of MRSA infection, an important tool is screening patients who enter the hospital, especially those patients who are surgical patients or who otherwise may be more susceptible to infection.

Screening for MRSA is a life-saving, cost-saving step, as the cost for treating patients with MRSA is a heavy one, since patients with MRSA simply cost more to treat in terms of nursing care, labs and other tests, and physician consultations, and patients with MRSA spend more days in the hospital.

Aside from the financial costs, the emotional and psychological costs of MRSA are nearly unbearable. I watched my mother spend day after day at my stepfather's bedside, hoping against hope that the antibiotics would work. In my stepfather's case, it was a slow but steady decline, as he began to be unable to fight other infections.

Bill Number 579 is a critical healthcare bill and as a healthcare professional and as someone with personal knowledge of the devastating loss that MRSA can bring, I strongly urge that screening be required in the hospitals plans.