

VANDERLAAN LAW GROUP, LLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

February 9, 2009

Regulation and Protection Subcommittee of Appropriations
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Office of the Healthcare Advocate

Dear Subcommittee:

I am writing to you to show support for the Office of Healthcare Advocate and to urge that this Office be allowed to continue to serve the citizens of Connecticut.

I am an attorney in private practice and have worked in the healthcare area for over 15 years. My clients include hospitals, physicians, home health care agencies and individual subscribers. The complexities surrounding healthcare coverage are very real and often create an environment where insured individuals accept denials by insurance companies. This results in lack of access to healthcare and increased costs to providers and taxpayers. I have had the pleasure of working with OHA on a number of occasions. Only with their assistance, I have been able to alleviate the financial burdens imposed on subscribers unnecessarily and secure the medical services that are so desperately needed. One such case involved a woman with stage 3 ovarian cancer. Her insurer denied coverage of medical treatment, which was her only hope of recovery, as experimental. Her medical provider would not provide the necessary treatment without substantial payment up front, which she could not afford. OHA assisted my efforts to appeal the insurer's denial by providing support in the form of medical expertise and communication with representatives of the insurer. This assistance proved invaluable; the denial was reversed and my client obtained the treatment she needed. That was 5 years ago, and I am happy to report that my client has been in remission ever since.

The benefits OHA provides to Connecticut citizens cannot be understated. I am personally aware of many individuals who have relied on the resources of OHA in the past to work through problems with healthcare insurance problems. All of them received calm assurance and direction about insurance at a time when they needed to focus on their own health and wellbeing, and they saved thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket healthcare costs.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Very truly yours,


MARIA PEPE VANDERLAAN

200 PLAYHOUSE CORNER, SOUTHBURY, CT 06488 • P (203)204-7300 • F (203)204-7301
HARTFORD SQUARE NORTH • 10 COLUMBUS BLVD. • 10TH FLOOR • HARTFORD, CT 06106 • (860)727-8182
VANDERLAANLAWGROUP.COM