

Testimony of Matt Pagano
Regarding the Governor's Proposed Deficit Mitigation Plan
And the Impact of the Governor's Rescissions
On Connecticut Children's Medical Center
December 9, 2009

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Matt Pagano. I am here to speak to you about the impact that the Governor's proposed mitigation plan will have on Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Lines 58 and 59 of the Governor's plan cut Connecticut Children's Medicaid revenue by a total of \$5 million annually. The State must reject these proposals in order to preserve the critical resources that Connecticut Children's provides each day.

My daughter Katie is a beautiful little six year old girl who is full of life and who rarely sits still; she loves first grade, and absolutely dominates on the soccer field. She's with us today because of Connecticut Children's Medical Center and one rather incredible doctor. On January 26, 2006 we found ourselves at CCMC for a rheumatology appointment. Katie, an otherwise active and happy two year old had been inexplicably limping for several months by that point and there was no conclusive evidence pointing definitively to any one diagnosis. That rheumatology visit led to a consult with an oncologist the same day who urged us to have Katie undergo a bone marrow aspiration. Our worst fears were realized when we learned the devastating news that Katie had Acute Myloid Leukemia and that she had a 40-60% chance of living.

Her treatment protocol included five rounds of intense chemotherapy, each of which necessitated a nearly month long in-patient stay. She was sequestered on the eighth floor in a special isolation room with other extreme sterile procedures brought to bear. Being our only child, we had the luxury of staying with her each night to mitigate her fears and to support her in her fight and in a very real sense; Connecticut Children's became our home. She came off treatment on July 20th, 2006 and she hasn't looked back.

The facility and the care that is given are beyond compare and we believe that if someone has to have a sick child, there is no better place on earth one would want to be. To provide that care is no doubt expensive and I can clearly recall a discussion that I had with Katie's oncologist regarding some financial realities. I was surprised to learn that considering the mission of Connecticut Children's and the fact that no child is turned away regardless of ability to pay, the eighth floor, where Katie stayed, didn't generate enough revenue to cover its own expense.

Over the six months we were there, we met many families all of whom were fighting a similar fight. As you might imagine, many stories ended well, and some heartbreakingly didn't. But regardless of the patient or the type of insurance the family had (or lack thereof), the quality of the care that that incredible team of providers rendered never changed. And that's the point that I wish to make today. Cancer doesn't discriminate. It affects children from every station in life regardless of socio-economic status. For the

legislature to contemplate a plan that further cuts reimbursement from the Medicaid system is unfair and further transfers the cost of caring for these beautiful children to other payers. I fear that that scenario will be unsustainable and Connecticut Children's won't be able to continue its mission of caring for every child in the best way they can.

We consider ourselves blessed and say a little prayer everyday and look forward to all of Katie's milestones in life. Please help other families obtain the same incredible care our little girl enjoyed. I urge you to reject the governor's proposals.