



University of Connecticut Health Center
John Dempsey Hospital

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TESTIMONY

Human Services Committee

February 5, 2009

Proposed Bill 38: AN ACT CONCERNING PAYMENT FOR SPECIALTY CARE TRANSPORTS

Senator Doyle, Representative Walker, members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **Proposed Bill 38: AN ACT CONCERNING PAYMENT FOR SPECIALTY CARE TRANSPORTS**

My name is Mike Summerer, MD and Ellen Leone, RN, MSN with the University of Connecticut Health Center.

Since 1975 the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) has been providing the State with specialized care and transport of critically ill neonatal infants through its Neonatal Intensive Care Transport Program. In FY 08, 311 neonates were transported by the UCHC Team coming from approximately 15 other hospitals. The transport is manned with a team of specialty trained healthcare professionals and a firefighter/EMT driver. The care required on these transports is extremely intensive.

A significant percentage, approximately 43% in FY 08, of the patient population transported by UCHC are Medicaid recipients. Since 2002, and based on a specialty care transport rate set by the Department of Public Health (DPH), the insurance companies and the Department of Social Services (DSS), are billed for the cost of the transport. Unlike private insurers, DSS does not recognize a specialty care transport (SCT) rate and only reimburses the UCHC a reduced Advanced Life Support (ALS) rate. This rate is significantly lower than the SCT rate. For example, the current specialty care transport rate for the Health Center Fire Department (excluding mileage and wait times) as authorized by the DPH is \$3496. While many private insurers will pay approximately 80% of the total bill, the Department of Social Services reimbursement rate is generally \$200-250 or approximately 7%.

Passage of this bill will allow DSS to generate a specialty care transport reimbursement rate that specifically addresses the high level of service required on specialty care transport units and it's related costs. This will assist the UCHC in continuing to provide this vital service to some of the state's most underserved. I humbly urge your support.

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