

THE
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OF HAMDEN

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Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Tony DelMastro. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Center of Hamden. I am here to offer comments on proposed language in Raised Bill # 5354, An Act to Provide Incentives for Hospitals to Adopt Electronic Health Records.

There has been enormous attention towards improving the health care system, including efficiencies that would be gained through the use of Electronic Medical Records systems. This particular bill addresses funding that may be available for Electronic Medical Records systems through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The current language identifies those who may share in these funds as "hospitals and eligible professionals". I suggest the language be modified to read "hospitals, State licensed behavioral health providers and eligible professionals." Electronic Medical Records systems have built in quality assurance features that would insure "clean" Medicaid claims that will allow providers and the State of Connecticut to retain federal funds rather than having them swept back to Washington due to compliance glitches.

I believe back in 2005 the State of Connecticut formed the Behavioral Health Partnership as part of the way of improving behavioral health services. Since then the State has embarked on strategically planned growth of in-home and community based services accessing Federal Medicaid funding through a variety of channels. State licensed behavioral health providers have been the engine behind the successful growth of community based services.

However, in many cases this process has been implemented without the infrastructure upgrades such as Electronic Medical Records systems that are needed to ensure compliance with the Federal Medicaid requirements and best practice quality assurance procedures through the use of available technology. Reducing time devoted to "manually" performing QA checks would provide opportunities for cost savings and/or attention devoted to enhancing quality of care.

Thank you considering my point of view.

