



VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT, INC.

One Long Wharf Drive
New Haven, CT 06511

203-777-5521
203-787-5198 Fax
www.vnascc.org

March 11, 2010

Testimony in Favor of
Raised H.B. 5411

From John R. Quinn
President/CEO

VNA Health Systems/Visiting Nurse Association of South Central Connecticut
One Long Wharf Drive
New Haven, CT 06511

Good afternoon Chairman Doyle, Chairman Walker and members of the Human Service Committee. My name is John Quinn, and I am President and CEO of VNA Health Systems which operates the Visiting Nurse Association of South Central Connecticut located in New Haven and CareSource, a private duty service based in Orange. We primarily serve patients and provide Home Care support in Greater New Haven County, the lower Naugatuck Valley and the Milford area. I appear before you today to support section 6 and section 2 of Raised Bill # 5411 "An Act Concerning Medicaid".

Section 6 will basically maximize federal funding for homecare by submitting a Medicaid Research and Demonstration Waiver under section 1115 of the Social Security Act designed specifically to convert some or all of the State-funded portion of the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly to Medicaid. This waiver could add up to savings from \$15 million to \$30 million annually to the state. These savings would be deposited in the existing Long Term Care Reinvestment Account and serve as the source of rate increase for providers under the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly. It was in 2007 that a Medicaid increase of 3% was given for homecare, with no increase for the past three years.

Let us take advantage of enhanced federal match under the stimulus bill to assure that non profit agencies receive rates that can cover expenses so that organizations like the VNA are able to carry on our services instead of having to close the doors to the poor and underinsured.



Serving Greater New Haven, Milford, the Shoreline and the Valley



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Section 2 allows for Medicaid to provide coverage for treatment for smoking cessation if ordered by a licensed healthcare professional with prescription licensure. I understand that 36% of Connecticut's Medicaid beneficiaries smoke. Many of the patients that we see under the Medicaid program could benefit from a smoking cessation treatment. Part of the Visiting Nurses role is to promote education to patients on the importance of taking their prescription drugs and how to maintain a lifestyle that would help keep them from being re-admitted to the hospital. Many patients including those with chronic heart failure and breathing difficulties would benefit from this coverage under Medicaid. It is time that Connecticut fund this program under the Medicaid State Plan to follow up on the 2006 legislative authorization for the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to cover smoking cessation services and that Connecticut remove itself from the list of being one of only four states that does not have any cessation coverage in its Medicaid Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,

John R. Quinn
PRESIDENT/CEO

VNA HEALTH SYSTEMS
VNA SOUTH CENTRAL CT.
CARE SOURCE
ONE LONG WHARF DRIVE
NEW HAVEN, CT. 06511

DIRECT PHONE: 203-859-6000
FAX: 203-772-3375

E MAIL: jquinn@vnascc.org



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