

Testimony of
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**Connecticut General Assembly
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
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Good afternoon Chairman Crisco, Chairman Fontana and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to speak with you today in support of **House Bill 5009 (Raised), An Act Concerning Wellness Programs and Expansion of Health Insurance Coverage**. I have had the opportunity to testify before this Committee on two previous occasions in an effort to seek insurance coverage for bone marrow testing. Together we have come very close to achieving this goal but have fallen short.

My name is Nicole Morrissette, and I am a 19 year old from Wethersfield currently a sophomore at Central Connecticut State University. Four years ago all I knew about Leukemia was that it was a type of cancer. Unfortunately since then Leukemia has made a big impact on my life. Two people I am very close to have been diagnosed with this disease. The first was my teacher Mrs. Gina Gallivan. She was 25 years old and in a matter of days she went from teaching English and coaching tennis to being diagnosed with this disease, and having to move to Boston's Dana Farber Cancer Institute where she could receive the best treatment. The second person was Sue Lyons. She was my mom's best friend, my neighbor, and someone who was like a second mother to me. Sue was also transferred to Boston right after she was diagnosed. Both Mrs. Gallivan and Sue needed bone marrow transplants to save their lives. Before that however they needed to go through the process of finding a donor. Sue had a bone marrow drive that was held at the Wethersfield Country Club, and Mrs. Gallivan had drives at Wethersfield High School and two

in Massachusetts. The difference between these drives is at the events held in Connecticut; the people who wanted to join the Bone Marrow Registry had to pay over \$60 dollars to be tested and entered onto the Registry, and in Massachusetts the cost was covered by insurance. Over 17,000 people in Connecticut will be diagnosed with cancer this year. Many of these will be cancer of the blood like Leukemia where a bone marrow transplant could save their lives. Cancer is something that is extremely emotionally stressful not only on the patient but also on the family members and friends. When you're going through this kind of stress you don't want to be worrying about the financial aspect. Personally knowing both Mrs. Gallivan and Sue has forced me to realize that life can change any minute and this could be me, you or a family member in need. The financial coverage for testing through insurance needs to be addressed by this state.

I urge your favorable support of this Bill! Thank you.