



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
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Commissioner

TESTIMONY OF
COMMISSIONER LINDA S. SCHWARTZ, RN, MSN, DrPH, FAAN
Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs
Presented to the Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2011

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Representative Candelaria and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, I am Linda Schwartz, Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs and I welcome this opportunity to comment on the Governor's Biennial Budget for FY 2012 and FY 2013 as it pertains to our agency. I am here to express my support for Governor Malloy's budgetary initiatives. I am very confident that our agency can maintain the current quality of care, services and programs to Connecticut's 277,000 veterans with this proposed budget.

As in past years, we intend to continue to research and explore additional sources of Federal VA grants and funds that will enhance the facilities at Rocky Hill and sustain the standards of health care and rehabilitative programs for the 480 veterans living on the campus. I am happy to report that last year we were able to generate revenue totaling a majority of the agency's operational costs.

It is my goal to continue to partner with VA Connecticut to assure a continuum of care that provides veterans in our state with timely, appropriate and cost effective health care. Additionally, there are proposed bills in the General Assembly that have the potential to increase our ability to identify veterans on state supported programs, such as Medicaid, that might be eligible for disability compensation, wartime service pensions, health care and medications from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This transfer of costs has the potential to save our state millions of dollars, as has already occurred in Washington State, California and Colorado, among others. I welcome the opportunity to develop a more efficient process to help ensure that Connecticut veterans are receiving all of the benefits and entitlements they have earned as a result of their service in the Armed Forces.

I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.