

**Testimony of Kenneth Robinson, MD, Medical Director and Program Director,  
LIFE STAR Helicopter Program, Hartford Hospital  
Before Appropriations Committee  
RE: Elimination of grant to LIFE STAR from state budget  
March 4, 2011**

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Kenneth Robinson, MD, I am the Medical Director and Program Director for LIFE STAR at Hartford Hospital.

I am here to ask you to please reinstate the \$1.4 million state grant to LIFE STAR back into the budget.

LIFE STAR has been in operation since 1985. In those 26 years we have flown over 24,000 patients. We have been in every town in Connecticut and we have flown into every hospital in Connecticut. We are the only licensed air medical transport program in the state.

We provide the highest level of out-of-hospital care available in Connecticut. In addition to cutting edge medical care, each year we provide a significant amount of outreach education, which includes scene safety presentations, civic presentations, injury prevention presentations and prom promise activities with local high schools. Last year, we had contact with over 22,000 through our outreach programs.

The majority of our expenses are fixed because we must be able to respond to a request at any time. Our rates are set by the state, based on our profit and loss statement from the previous year. Last year we transported 1115 patients and lost approximately \$500,000 on operations with the state subsidy. If we had not had the state subsidy we would have lost \$1.9 million on operations. The state grant is vital to maintaining our operations.

We save lives every year and improve the outcomes of over 1100 patients each year. Without the state grant we may not be able to continue our service at the present level. This would adversely affect the health and well being of many Connecticut citizens. Please add the state grant to LIFE STAR back into the budget.

Lastly, if you do not find it feasible to reinstate the grant to LIFE STAR, I ask that you allow the program to increase our rates. Presently, our rates are less than half of that of our two closest neighboring programs in New York and Massachusetts. If we were permitted to increase our rates to a level similar to that of the neighboring programs, we would no longer need the grant from the state.

Thank You.