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**Testimony in Support of the
Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled
Appropriations Committee Hearing – March 4, 2011**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

With the state facing a budget deficit, the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled may be in jeopardy. I understand the fiscal crisis the state is facing, but the program has a waiting list of 63 and it can save more than \$4,247 per person per month for every person on the program who is not institutionalized

This program provides home-based services to people age 18-64 with degenerative neurological conditions who are at risk of being institutionalized in nursing homes.

If this program is not funded, the 41 individuals currently on the program will lose their home care and have to be inappropriately institutionalized. Please continue funding this program! Not only has it made an incredible difference for these 41 individuals and their families, it saves the state \$2,055,576 each year.

The 2010 state budget included \$720,000 that provides home and community based services for these younger individuals to remain at home. We believe the program must be preserved to save money.

As an active member of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Connecticut Chapter and as a Nurse Practitioner working with individuals with disabilities in the home environment, I believe all people with disabilities should have access to long-term care that is designed to help people live as independently as possible.

The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled provides services which may include care management, adult day health programs, chore assistance, companions, home health care, home delivered meals, homemaker services, assisted living services and personal care attendants. It benefits families and the community by creating jobs in the health and home care services fields, increases income tax revenue through new jobs, allowing family caregivers to maintain their employment, pay taxes and stay afloat.

As a Nurse Practitioner with a specialty in multiple sclerosis, I work for Independence Care System in New York City. Independence Care System (ICS) is a nonprofit

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organization committed to assisting people with disabilities to live independently. In my role as a NP Consultant, I manage the care of the most medically complex members with multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injury. I have seen first hand the benefits of keeping our members in their own home environment. Our members have more autonomy, an increased sense of power and confidence, and ongoing access to the normal comforts of home, such as seeing loved ones on a daily basis, socializing with neighbors and friends, the privacy of their own space, and access to their own bed and bathroom. Our research has proven that individuals living in the home environment have better health outcomes. They tend to have less secondary complications of disability, such as pressure ulcers, urinary tract infections and pneumonia.

It is my hope that you will understand the tremendous benefit of this program and vote to preserve the CT Home Care for the Disabled Program.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. The CT Home Care Program for the Disabled makes a difference in the lives of many people living with MS in Connecticut. Please continue to support it.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Rooney-Crino MS, MPH, ANP, MSCN
Nurse Practitioner