



Connecticut Association of Optometrists

750 Old Main Street, Suite 304  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067  
860 529-1900  
860 529-4411 (FAX)  
[www.cteyes.org](http://www.cteyes.org)

## **Joint Public Hearing**

February 14, 2011

Members of the committees, I am Dr. Jerry Hardison, practicing optometrist here in Hartford and a past president of the Connecticut Association of Optometrists. I would like to say a few words in support of HB 6305, **An Act Concerning Implementation of the Sustinet Plan.**

From the Sustinet Report to this Assembly we read: "Sustinet will implement delivery system and payment reforms that move toward a coordinated, patient-centered, evidence based approach to health care."

This may sound confusing or even sugar coated, but I assure you it is neither. This goal is substantiated by countless hours of effort by 100's of volunteers that came together and recognized that health care can be made more affordable, accessible and efficient.

I was privileged to be a member of the Health Care Quality and Provider Advisory Committee of Sustinet. We met over a 6 month period last year and had members from all health care professions and agencies as well as public interest groups, consumers, non-profits, legal professions and insurers. You have to wonder if you can accomplish anything in a group with such varying and personal interests, but we all recognized that in order to have true reform the methodology of care must change.

To improve the quality and safety of care here are some of the initiatives we recommended:

- The formation of standing committees representing all provider groups that review, establish and promote evidence based clinical guidelines. These guidelines will become the basis for quality measures to evaluate clinical care. These measures will become the basis for payment reform.

- The formation of patient centered medical homes that fully embrace the skills, resources and mandated services of all participating providers as defined in state statutes. This will ensure patient access to all sources of care based on their needs and particular desires.
- Allowing providers coordinated access to practice management opportunities in order to develop more efficient practices, provide high quality targeted patient educational resources and through HIE (health information exchange) have real time access to patient history and data.

What does this all mean for me as an optometrist in an urban setting providing care for many of our society's less fortunate citizens? Simply:

- Ready access to my patient's health history and past treatments that in many cases is not reliably accessible.
- Resources that allow my patient to be better educated about and take responsibility for their condition.
- Efficient, direct and prompt referrals when needed through the concept of patient centered medical homes as well as direct and timely feedback to me, all with the help of HIE.

To all of us whether you work in the system or a patient within the system, this means more efficient and effective care with long term coordinated outcomes leading to better health and reduced cost.

Without a doubt, active participation by providers will be vital to the success of any reform. I would endorse the concept of having an "Advisory Committee" comprised of healing arts practitioners that can meet with the Sustinet Board at least quarterly to discuss program issues.

On behalf of the Connecticut Association of Optometrists and our patients, I urge you to consider the value of this program, recognizing the efforts of so many volunteers and put Connecticut at the forefront of health care reform. And at the very least, if this is not fiscally possible, consider applying this reform to our current public assistance programs.

Thank you for your time.

Jerry S. Hardison, OD  
Hartford, CT  
860-236-5831  
[westendeyecare@snet.net](mailto:westendeyecare@snet.net)