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**Testimony of Speaker of the House Christopher G. Donovan
To the Public Health Committee regarding
House Bill 5048, AA Requiring Certificate of Need Approval for the Termination of Inpatient
and Outpatient Services by a Hospital**

February 9, 2011

Good morning Representative Ritter, Senator Stillman, and members of the Public Health Committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on **HB 5048, AA Requiring Certificate of Need Approval for the Termination of Inpatient and Outpatient Services by a Hospital**. This bill restores the certificate of need process for hospitals seeking a termination of services. Under prior law, medical facilities were required to apply for a CON from the Office of Health Care Access in order to terminate services. This process included noticing the state and the public and holding a hearing at the public's request. This process was in place to give the public adequate notice that services could be shutting down, permit the community an opportunity to give feedback and make plans for accessing alternate services.

Last session changes were made to the CON process so that currently if a medical facility wants to close a service that predated the CON process, a CON is not required. The facility simply has to notify OHCA 60 days prior to terminating services. HB 5048 restores the transparency of the public notice and comment process.

Members of the public and public officials deserve an opportunity to weigh in on issues of access, quality and cost prior to the final decision is made to close a service. Our communities deserve enough notice to make appropriate alternate arrangements to ensure continuity of care, especially for those among us who are most vulnerable.

I urge your support for this proposal. Thank you for your consideration.