

Testimony – February 14, 2011
Before the Public Health, Insurance, Human Services
of the CT General Assembly
Submitted by Rev. Bonita Grubbs,
Executive Director of Christian Community Action and
Member, SustiNet Board of Directors

Good afternoon, Co-chairs and member of the Committees assembled here today.

Appearing before you to offer testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 6305 is an honor and a privilege. After more than 1 ½ years, many meetings, conference calls and conversations, the members of the SustiNet Board of Directors submitted the report that makes this hearing possible. I am extremely proud to be part of designing an effort that is as bold and far reaching as SustiNet.

The first Section of this Bill contains language like “for the benefit of the people” and “increase of their welfare and prosperity” and “fullest opportunity to obtain health care by promoting access to high quality health care that is effective, efficient, safe, timely patient-centered and equitable.”

Because of my ministerial training, these words are right up my “spiritual alley.” Because of public health training, they are also up my “systemic alley.” Their significance is in how they articulate both a vision and practical details related to how the State of CT can establish a health care system that works for people who need it.

As someone who works with people who are challenged economically and use HUSKY, I see this Bill as an opportunity to increase access to doctors and health care, whether it is medical, behavioral or oral. The populations with which I work all need care in one of these – if not all of these – areas. I also see the value of creating an opportunity for business, municipal employees and non profit organizations to participate.

I would encourage you to pay attention to how access can be increased through payment reforms and more equitable provider rates. I would also encourage you to consider ways in which we can focus on prevention strategies.

Finally, I recognize that many people and organizations are concerned about the cost of the SustiNet Plan. So am I. We live in difficult economic times and the State of CT has a \$3.5 B projected deficit so clearly, in the days ahead, you must pay attention to the costs related to implementing this Plan, while protecting and

promoting the health of CT's citizens and increasing the number of people who can receive health coverage by 200,000.

I am grateful for being able to share some brief remarks with you today, but I am also grateful to have worked with all of the individuals on the Sustinet Board, the consultants and advisory committee members. I will be following the process as it goes forward and, knowing me, joining with the members of the Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care to do everything I can to push for passage of this Bill. Thank you.