



**Testimony by Sal Luciano, Executive Director
Council 4 AFSCME Council 4
Insurance and Real Estate Committees
Re: HB 6308 and 6305
Feb. 14th 2011**

Good morning distinguished members of the Real Estate and Insurance Committees. My name is Sal Luciano.

I am the Executive Director of Council 4 AFSCME, a union representing 35,000 workers in the public service.

You all have heard these words: "That which is transplanted is sustained". This is the English translation of CT's state motto.

Sustinet is the Latin name for 'sustained'. The Healthcare 4 All Foundation thought up the name. The need for a health care system (instead of a health care business) was seen at HC Insurance costs went up 100% in 8 years. This type of increase is not sustainable.

What does Sustinet do?

For those that want Government out of health care they need know that between those on Medicaid, Medicare, State and County and municipal workers coverage, Government already covers a majority of people.

The state of Connecticut spends almost 7 Billion dollars a year between these (not including municipalities) and could do it much better if it **coordinated the state's purchasing power; a concept referred to as pooling.**

Just one example is the city of Hartford. By buying prescription drugs at State employee prices, Hartford saves 2 million dollars a year. And the additional employees allow CT to reach the next tier of rebates, saving CT taxpayers another 6 million dollars.

It would reduce emergency room visits by having medical homes.

Emergency room visits run 10 to 15 times the cost of a Dr. 's office visit.

Yet the Doctor's office itself drives people to the emergency room. When you call the doctor The first thing on the answering machine or phone service tells you that if "you don't think you can wait to make an appointment, go to the emergency room".

Medical home are open into the evening and for later hours, urgent care clinics will be provided. These small innovations will not only help you be seen quicker and more inexpensively, it saves lives as the emergency room will be used for well...Emergencies.

It would provide better outcomes: SustiNet would pay physicians and hospitals a little more for better outcomes. The only reason we have such high (3rd world) infection rates is that there is no incentive not to. If you get an infection now, you get more treatment; the health care industry charges you more. Under SustiNet, providers would get more money to keep infections down and they would have to provide care free if you get an infection.

It would also treat you and not your illness. If for example, you come to see your dr. with a sprained ankle, they will also see what screenings you may need based on your age and family history.

It would keep costs lower by making sure you get the care you need. SustiNet would practice evidence based medicine. By this I mean that you get the care that best practices say you should. For example, you would get robotic surgery if that is what is required and you would NOT get it if it is to help pay for the hospital's mortgage on those machines.

There are about 6,000 prescription drugs and 4,000 surgical procedures. Medicine today is practiced more of an art than as a science.

It would keep costs lower by preventing chronic diseases. 5 % of a health care system's members cost 50% of the health care dollars. People with diabetes tend to have other problems, eyesight, hypertension cholesterol ED and other problems.

For every person you prevent from getting a chronic disease, they reduce the costs significantly AND have better health.

Obesity is the #1 epidemic in this country. 10 years ago, no state had a 30% obesity rate and today there are 9. The state that was the heaviest ten years ago is leaner than the leanest state (Colorado) now. This masks the biggest problem; children. Our children are so heavy that they no longer call type 2 diabetes "adult onset". Children as young as 8 are getting type 2 diabetes.

It would coordinate information in electronic form. If you were in an accident and were unable to speak, the hospital, any hospital could find out about your medical history and make sure they provided good care. They would know if you are allergic to anything, they would know what medications you are on so that they didn't give you something that might react badly with the medication that you are on.

If, as some claim, as I claim, that the playing field is not level, strong empirical evidence shows it is tipped in the favor of management, not labor.

Our union urges your support of HB 6308 and 6305. We have come too far to turn back the hands of progress and fairness. Thank you very much.