

**Testimony**  
**Public Health, Insurance and Real Estate, and Human Services Committees**  
**February 14, 2011**  
**H.B. No. 6305 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE**  
**SUSTINET PLAN**

Senators Stillman, Crisco and Musto, Representatives Ritter, Megna and Tercyak and members of the Public Health, Insurance and Real Estate, and Human Services Committees, I would like to thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify in support of **H.B. No. 6305 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTINET PLAN**

My name is Bruce Gould. I'm an internist and primary care physician and serve as the medical director at the St. Francis/University of Connecticut Primary Care Center at the Burgdorf Health Center in the north end of Hartford. This community healthcare facility serves the needs of some of the most vulnerable and underserved populations in the state. I am also the Associate Dean for Primary Care, the Director of the Connecticut Area Health Education Center Program at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and medical director of the Hartford Department of Health and Human Services.

Twenty three years ago, I emigrated to Hartford from Worcester Massachusetts, a distance of some 70 miles...not terribly far. I came to the Burgdorf and UConn to pursue a calling of sorts...to care for the underserved. The good news is that I have job security...in this country of untold gifts and wealth, we have somehow managed to continually increase the numbers of our neighbors who have no insurance and no right to any health care. Connecticut is not alone in this pursuit, it is a national pastime. But I look back at my former home to our north and I see enormous change and innovation in attempting to address the needs of its citizens. I love Connecticut, my adoptive home. We are bright, and energetic and caring but Connecticut is the land of steady habits, and, with each passing year, I have seen our neighboring states blast ahead of us in health care systems change, in attempts to broaden the safety net, and in attempts to assure all their citizens access to meaningful insurance and quality health care.

Almost 18 months ago, I was asked to join the board of SustiNet to assist in turning enabling legislation into improved access to and quality of health care at more sustainable cost. For 18 months, 11 board members and over 200 unpaid volunteer citizen experts have labored to add meat to the bones provided by the legislation. The process was transparent, the participants diverse and discussions uncensored and wide ranging, With the help of some of the best health care consultants and economists available, literature was reviewed, best practices established, models of care in other states identified and a report took form that was presented to the Governor and the Legislature in January

proposing moving forward with the implementation of the Sustinet Plan. Today, I implore you, our elected representatives, to vote to move forward with Sustinet. It has taken decades to get to this point and if we falter now, we may not see this opportunity again for decades to come.

I care for the poor...it is my calling. Every day at the clinic, and at the outreach efforts I oversee for the University, I see a cross section of our neighbors. Most are working, trying to make a better life for themselves and their children. Many are ill often from preventable conditions that no one had the time, money or inclination to attempt to prevent. All are asking for help. Too often to count, there is little I can do, because in this country if you are poor and uninsured, you have a right to nothing. My colleagues and I, spend untold hours scrounging for the resources to treat the most needy. Sadly, we often come up short...frustrating for us...potentially catastrophic for our patients.

Sustinet is not the answer to all my prayers...but it is a start. It promises to be a well coordinated health plan that will provide meaningful coverage to a diverse cross section of Connecticut's citizens. Based on the patient centered medical home model, it is designed to assist patients in managing their own care, clinicians in coordinating the complexity of care we now see in day to day practice...while focusing on prevention and chronic disease case management and achieving better outcomes both medically and financially. Will this transformation be easy...it never is...especially in the land of steady habits. But as a clinician knee deep in the trenches, I see no other possible answer. I again implore you to implement the Sustinet Plan. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bruce E. Gould MD, FACP  
Associate Dean for Primary Care  
Director, Connecticut Area Health Education (AHEC Program)  
Medical Director, Burgdorf Health Center  
Medical Director, Hartford Department of Health and Human Services  
University of Connecticut School of Medicine  
263 Farmington Avenue, Room CG149  
Farmington, Connecticut 06030-2926  
Telephone: (860) 679-4322  
Fax: (860) 679-1101  
E-Mail: [gould@adp.uchc.edu](mailto:gould@adp.uchc.edu)