



**TESTIMONY OF  
DAVID A. WHITEAD  
*President and Chief Executive Officer  
The William W. Backus Hospital*  
SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
February 17, 2012**

**HB 5014, AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES  
AND REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2013**

The William W. Backus Hospital appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5014, AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2013.**

Backus is a community hospital with more than 1,700 full- and part-time employees. The hospital provides acute care services for nearly one-quarter million residents in eastern Connecticut. Backus operates the only Trauma Center east of the Connecticut River. The hospital also provides a Comprehensive Community Cancer Center accredited by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer, and a state-certified Stroke Program. The hospital offers a full array of laboratory and diagnostic imaging services. Our Emergency Department had 63,198 visits during Fiscal Year 2011, and there were 435,458 outpatient visits.

The Backus health system operates outpatient health centers in Norwich, Plainfield, Colchester, Ledyard and Montville; laboratory services throughout the eastern Connecticut region, and the Backus Outpatient Care Center in Norwich.

During Fiscal Year 2011, Backus provided \$56,938,529 in uncompensated and charity care, and \$3,151,656 in subsidized health services. In addition, Backus conducted an array of community health improvement initiatives, research and community-building activities.

- Backus knows all too well how difficult it is to operate in this economic environment and make choices among competing priorities. We sincerely thank Governor Malloy for submitting a budget that maintains hospitals' Medicaid rates. We do, however, have concerns over several provisions in the proposed budget.
- Backus opposes several provisions in HB 5014 that would negatively impact hospitals and the communities we serve.

- Specifically, we oppose those provisions that will:
  - (1) reduce Medicaid Low-Income Adult enrollment by seeking a waiver to establish a \$25,000 asset limit (excluding an automobile or home); count family income when determining eligibility for individuals under the age of 26 and either living with their parents or claimed as a dependent for tax purposes; and impose limits on certain medical services;
  - (2) reduce reimbursement rates for certain dental benefits for individuals in the Medicaid program; and
  - (3) revert rates for air ambulances to rates in place in FY 2011.
  
- We concur with you, Senator Harp and Representative Walker, as well as the chairs of the Human Services and Public Health Committees, when, in your January 11, 2012, letter to Commissioner of the Department of Social Services Roderick L. Bremby, you cautioned that the Medicaid LIA population is one of our most vulnerable, and any modifications of the program would likely cause significant disruption and a loss of benefits.
- These proposed changes will impede access to healthcare coverage for a vulnerable population that just recently became eligible for Medicaid coverage under federal reform.
- Each of these reductions will have a negative impact upon Connecticut hospitals, and make it more difficult for people to find care in the appropriate setting and enroll and remain in Medicaid. In these difficult economic times, it is more important than ever that the state is steadfast in its commitment to help those who cannot help themselves.

If you have any questions, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,



Dave Whitehead  
President and Chief Executive Officer

860-889-8331 x2201  
[dwhitehead@wwbh.org](mailto:dwhitehead@wwbh.org)