



**Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing March 27, 2012
Comments Regarding S.B. 381**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am Janine Fay, CEO of VNA Community Healthcare and am providing comments regarding S.B. 381. We are a nonprofit home care agency that cares for a wide variety of patients, including those with chronic persistent mental illness who require medication administration. In the past few months, as a result of the Governor's budget proposal to utilize unlicensed personnel to administer medications to individuals in the community, we have been working diligently with the Administration and the Legislature to craft a responsible nurse delegation model. We recognize that new models of care must be created in order to reduce costs. Our concern is that the approach to a model of nurse delegation must be carefully constructed so that client safety is ensured. Medication administration is not just the act of giving a pill. There is a nursing assessment and judgment component that can not be delegated to unlicensed personnel. Creating a model that attends to both these issues is critical.

Since the incorporation of home care into the Behavioral Health Partnership in April 2011, we have been working closely with Value Options, the administrative services organization for BHP. Those efforts have resulted in our agency and others already achieving sizable decreases in utilization and costs related to medication administration. This illustrates the value of a measured, person-centered approach, where providers and the state are working in concert to reduce utilization while maintaining quality. We believe such a model would be valuable when looking to institute nurse delegation in Connecticut.

The Money Follows the Person Program has indicated that medication administration by nurses is causing a barrier to moving people out of facilities and into the community. As a long time community based provider I can assure you we are very supportive of having people receive care in the home setting versus an institution. We also understand that this population has different characteristics from those of our psychiatric patients. Again, the most important factor is that the individual's physical and mental status be assessed by the nurse and then he or she determines whether licensed or unlicensed personnel be used for medication administration.

I appreciate the time and attention committee members have given to working on this sensitive issue of how best to provide medication administration for vulnerable populations. I would be happy to provide any further information needed as you work out details of the budget proposal. Thank you.

BESIDE YOU AT EVERY TURN