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**Testimony of Victoria Veltri
Healthcare Advocate**

Submitted to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee

In support of SB 97

February 21, 2012

Good afternoon, Representative Megna, Senator Crisco, Senator Kelly, Representative Sampson, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony before you today. For the record, I am Vicki Veltri, the Healthcare Advocate. OHA is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission to assure managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare, to educate consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans, and to inform legislators of problems consumers face in accessing care and propose solutions to those problems.

We support SB 97 to provide access to screening magnetic resonance imaging for patients with dense breast tissue or at increased risk of breast cancer without the financial burden of deductibles, coinsurance, copayments, or other out-of-pocket expense. Screening is vital for detection of breast cancer at its earliest, most curable stage. Evidence has shown that mammogram screenings, currently covered at 100%, are ineffective for some patients. These patients should not be denied affordable access to preventative healthcare or financially penalized based on the method of screening their doctor recommends. Especially when studies have found that patients with dense breast tissue are at a higher risk of breast cancer and their tumors are more likely to have certain aggressive characteristics.¹

The Office of the Healthcare Advocate supports the principles of access to quality healthcare, evidence-based improvements to our healthcare system, and consumer maximization of value for their health insurance premiums. We appreciate the opportunity to testify today on behalf of our state's 3.5 million healthcare consumers.

If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at victoria.veltri@ct.gov.

¹ *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, July 27, 2011