

Testimony of
Hospice Southeastern Connecticut
Before the Legislature's Public Health Committee
10:00 AM, Friday March 16, 2012
Room 1D, Legislative Office Building Hartford, Connecticut

My name is Maureen Collins. I am the Director of Clinical Services for Hospice Southeastern Connecticut and a registered nurse. **I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 5499 (Raised) An Act Concerning Regulations Relating to Hospice Care.** I strongly support the concept set forth in the bill and I am asking you to favorably support it. The intent of this legislation is to increase access to the highest quality hospice care. However, there is a technical defect in this bill and I am recommending the following be amended: Suggested Revisions for H.B.5499 section (a) after "pursuant to 42 USC 1395x" (line 6):**Shall be authorized to operate a hospice facility, including a hospice residence, for the purpose of providing hospice services for terminally ill patients who are in need of hospice home care or hospice inpatient services. The hospice facility including a hospice residence, must be able to provide the following levels of hospice care: routine, general inpatient , continuous or respite.**

Resuming in the H.B. 5499 with the sentence (line 11)"The residence shall provide a homelike environment..."

Supporting **HB 5499** with these revisions will require the Department of Public Health to adopt the Inpatient Hospice Regulations **19a-122b-1 to 19a-122b-14.**

The current hospice regulations were established 35 years ago. The proposed regulations written with 28 of the 29 hospices in Connecticut and the Department of Public Health comply with the 2008 Medicare Conditions of Participation.

These regulations would allow the full continuum of hospice care. This includes care in the home, hospital, skilled nursing facility and a hospice residence. Currently there are only two hospice residences in Connecticut, located in Middletown and Branford.

Terminally ill patients and their families in Southeastern Connecticut deserve to have access to a hospice residence, with a home like environment, when care in the home is not possible.

My sister and two of my closest friends died on our hospice program. Because they had the support of family and friends they were able to remain at home to die surrounded by their loved ones. If that support had not been available or had they had symptoms not easily controlled in the home I would have had to travel more than 50 miles one way to be with them at the end of their life. This is a burden that should not be imposed on terminally ill patients and their families.

I strongly urge you to support **HB 5499** with the above recommendations, to ensure quality state of the art care and **ACCESS** to hospice care throughout the state, allowing hospice patients and their families to receive care in their own community.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at 860.848.5699 or mcollins@hospicesect.org.