



## State of Connecticut

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LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### **HB 5499 - An Act Concerning Regulations Relating to Hospice Care Public Health Committee Public Hearing March 16, 2012**

Senator Gerrantana, Senator Slossberg, Senator Welch, Representative Ritter, Representative Lyddy, Representative Perillo and Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am here to express my opposition to ***HB 5499, An Act Concerning Regulations Relating to Hospice Care***. This bill mandates the Commissioner of Public Health to adopt the minimum federal guidelines for hospice care.

This bill proposes reductions in state regulations for hospice care. The Connecticut Department of Public Health is considering radical reductions in state regulations for hospice care. National for-profit hospice care companies have been lobbying for these changes since Governor Rell's administration. That is because reduced regulations equal reduced operating costs and greater profits. Many of the companies pushing to get Connecticut's hospice regulations reduced are themselves the current targets of state and federal investigations for fraud against Medicare—fraud that in many cases involves reductions in the quality of patient care; fraud and reduced care that Connecticut's terminally-ill patients have thankfully avoided due to our current regulations.

Connecticut's in-patient hospice care regulations require rigorous standards, including on-site medical professionals and pharmaceutical and religious services. The new proposed regulations would repeal some of these requirements and reduce patient/medical staff ratios.

Connecticut's existing regulations have assured our loved ones will receive the best care at their most vulnerable point in their lives. Should the new regulations go through, Connecticut hospice care runs the risk of sliding into the mire that threatens other states. At a time, when Connecticut struggles to identify and correct fraud in some of our social service programs, why would we want to replace our nationally acclaimed hospice standards with Medicare minimum standards that will invite fraud and allow the for-profit industry to take advantage of our most vulnerable and terminally-ill patients.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Vincent J. Candelora*

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VJC/pb