



**Testimony of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center
to the Public Health Committee Regarding
*Senate Bill 56, An Act Concerning Pulse Oximetry Screening For Newborn Infants***

March 7, 2012

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts about *Senate Bill 56, An Act Concerning Pulse Oximetry Screening For Newborn Infants*. My name is Victor Herson, MD, and I am Director of Neonatology at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center and I am submitting this testimony in support to the proposed legislation.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, congenital heart defects account for 24% of infant deaths due to birth defects. In the United States, about 4,800 (or 11.6 per 10,000) babies born every year have one of seven critical congenital heart defects. Babies with one of these defects are at significant risk of disability or death if not diagnosed soon after birth. Some of these defects could be detected using pulse oximetry screening, which is a test to determine the amount of oxygen in the blood and pulse rate. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has recently recommended pulse oximetry screening for congenital heart disease and planning for implementing this recommendation is already underway at many hospitals in Connecticut.

At Connecticut Children's, mandated pulse oximetry testing will affect our cardiologists who will be asked to provide consultation services to families with infants who "fail" the screen. Connecticut Children's physicians from our Divisions of Neonatology and Cardiology are involved in a group formed through the Connecticut Chapter of the AAP that is developing a regional process to address referrals in an effective and efficient manner.

I urge you to support SB 56 because it will have a positive impact on children and families. Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Jane Baird, Connecticut Children's Director of Government Relations, at 860-545-5861.