



**TESTIMONY OF  
KURT BARWIS, FACHE  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
BRISTOL HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CARE GROUP, INC.  
BEFORE THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, March 21, 2012**

**SB 425, An Act Concerning A Basic Health Program**

My name is Kurt Barwis. I am the President and CEO of Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group. I am testifying today in opposition to SB 425, **An Act Concerning A Basic Health Program**.

Bristol Hospital shares the same concerns as the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) and other member hospitals throughout the state—that the establishment of the Basic Health Program (BHP) does not solve the existing issues of the Medicaid program for patients, providers or businesses. Inadequate funding for Medicaid has been a problem that has affected beneficiaries, the state, hospitals and employers for many years. Hospitals like ours struggle with determining how to shift the Medicaid underfunding of more than a \$1 million a day to those who receive their health insurance through their employer. Soon the Medicaid cost shift will be \$2 million a day.

Approving SB 425 and creating the BHP will exacerbate these existing problems:

- It will not improve access to non-hospital based services for Medicaid patients
- It fails to address the underfunding of hospitals which will result in tremendous costs for Connecticut businesses and employees

- It does not ensure that the operation of this plan will not add to the staggering cost shift borne by Connecticut businesses and employees
- And the adoption of a BHP will cause us to miss an opportunity to break the cycle of inadequate access and the burden caused to employers as a result of cost-shifting

We echo CHA's sentiment that a better approach would be to enroll these individuals into the health insurance exchange and supplement federal funding with the resulting state savings. This would provide the resources necessary to cover any out-of-pocket expenses and missing services.

Founded in 1921, Bristol Hospital is a 134-bed acute care hospital that is committed to the health and well-being of those in the Greater Bristol community. Like our hospital counterparts throughout the state, Bristol Hospital provides care to all people regardless of their ability to pay.

Everyday our doctors, nurses and health care professionals see the consequences and health implications for individuals and families who lack access to care and coverage. It's for those reasons that Bristol Hospital stands ready to partner on solutions to create a system of health care coverage that ensures access to all residents. This system must ensure seamless coordinated care that is sufficiently financed and affordable to all individuals and families.

Thank you for consideration of our position,



Kurt Barwis, FACHE  
President and CEO  
Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group, Inc.