

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 425

Paula Styles-Newson

Members of the Committee,

My name is Paula Styles-Newson. I have been a Hartford resident for 63-years. I am a Marine Veteran of the Vietnam War. I am also a member of Caring Families Coalition. I am here to ask you to support H.B. 5450. SB 450 425

I have Multiple-Sclerosis, arthritis and I have been diagnosed as bi-polar.

I am currently on Medicare Part A and I am also on Medicaid Spend Down. For those of you who are not familiar with Spend Down, it means that I earn too much money for Medicaid and must meet Spend Down Deductible to then qualify for Medicaid (in my case, that's about \$1600). Since I don't have non-service or service connected percentages through the military, I cannot get dental. This is why I need Medicaid. But I cannot continue to accumulate health related bills on my income.

I receive \$1147 per month from Social Security and have no other source income.

Dealing with MS is not an easy battle. When I wake up every morning I am in excruciating pain. It takes a few hours to begin to release my muscles so that I can begin my day. In a day, I take twenty-three different medications. I am tired and hurting but I remain vigilant and I fight because that is just my spirit.

I should not have to worry about a \$1600 Spend Down. Passing this bill will eliminate the many problems of Medicaid Spend Down. I know a number of my friends who are on Spend Down and because they cannot meet it, they go to the Emergency Room to get the help they need and incur an event greater debt for themselves and the state.

My son is 42-years-old. He also has MS. His case is much more detrimental than mine because his spirit is shattered. He only has 40% mobility and because he was Spend Down he wasn't able to get the necessary medications to relief his pain. It took from October of last year until February of this year to get him his medication. He didn't deserve to be in that much pain for so long.

If you do not pass the Basic Health Program, my son and I will be switching back and forth between the exchange and Medicaid. I'm afraid there will be times when we will have no coverage or when the formularies will change and our prescription drug coverage will get messed up.

Passing this bill will bring much needed relief to the quality of life for me and my son. It will also prevent the churning problem of Spend Down. We need the State Basic Health Program and it needs to be managed by the state NOT by insurance companies. Please support H.B. 5450.

SB 450 425