

Testimony of
Wayne Wright, President & CEO of Aetna & ASM Ambulance
IN OPPOSITION TO
HB-6350- AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO
REVENUE

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Walker and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Wayne Wright and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of Aetna Ambulance & Ambulance Service of Manchester LLC. I am here today to voice my opposition to the introduction of stretcher vans as a mode of medical transportation for non-ambulatory Medicaid recipients.

Connecticut hospital patients and nursing home residents are frequently transported to and from other health care facilities by ambulance as non-emergency medical transports. These patients may be coming from or going to the hospital for treatments, dialysis, follow-up medical appointments or to have further testing. Patients that are transported by ambulance are non-ambulatory and require transport in a stretcher, and in a significant number of cases have other medical concerns. These patients tend to need various types of assistance to be transported in addition to attendance of a medical trained individual during transport.

As emergency medical services providers, ambulance providers' number one priority is the health and safety of the individual during their trip to or from the community or health care facilities. Ambulances have the necessary equipment to deal with unforeseen medical conditions during transport. Ambulances have specially credentialed health care staff in the vehicle with the patient during transport. Ambulance staffs know how to properly move the patient, how to adjust the stretcher and how to attend to the needs of the patient during transport.

The introduction of stretcher vans for these medically challenged individuals in Medicaid is wrong for a number of reasons.

- Non-ambulatory patients need to be transported in a properly equipped vehicle with specially trained health care professionals who know what to do if some unpredictable health situation occurs during transport.
- In this era of patient centered care, this proposal ignores the needs of the patient and focuses on unachievable, unsubstantiated cost savings. For example, in state fiscal year 2011 the Medicaid program spent approximately \$6.9 million on non-emergency medical transportation out of an overall \$30 million for non-emergency medical transportation expenditures. Even factoring in an increase in ambulance non-emergency medical transportation transport due to the recent increase in clients, to reach a \$5.4 million annual savings you have to assume that 80-85% of the present ambulance trips go to stretcher vans. Does anyone in this room believe that 80-85% of the non-ambulatory Medicaid patients being transferred to and from nursing homes, to and from hospitals can be relegated to a stretcher van for transport?
- The decision to transport a non-ambulatory patient by stretcher van will be made by someone reading through criteria determined by Logisticare, the transportation broker. Not by the medical professionals at the skilled nursing facility, not by the medical professionals at the hospitals, not by the patient's attending physician...in essence not by someone who knows the frailties of the patient.

As Connecticut and this legislative body redesigns our healthcare systems and programs to focus on patient centered care, this stretcher van proposal completely disregards the health and safety of the patient. While the proposal was developed strictly for fiscal reasons, even those projections are flawed. The assumptions are erroneous and the numbers don't add up.

I urge you to reject this proposal which takes a step backwards in our collective goal of providing quality health care services to medically compromised Medicaid patients. I urge you to reject this proposal which is not only built on unreasonable assumptions and unachievable projections but in the long run may increase costs to the state and our dedicated health care providers.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to offer my professional opinion on this issue that will negatively impact the quality of services to Medicaid recipients and has the potential to jeopardize their health care.