TESTIMONY OF
Cindy Russo, Senior Vice President
MidState Medical Center

BEFORE THE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Friday, February 22, 2013

HB 6350, *AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE*

- My name is Cindy Russo, and I am the Senior Vice President of Operations at MidState Medical Center in Meriden.

- I echo the comments of my colleagues made tonight on the severe impact these budget cuts will have on our hospital operations, and more importantly, on our patients and employees.

- Throughout the history of our hospital, using the principles of continuous quality improvement (CQI) we have placed great effort in thinking and acting strategically about how we can better utilize our resources while enhancing the care we provide – as well as save critical dollars that will help us survive in these challenging times. In the last 2 years we have augmented our initiatives to include the use of Lean principles to eliminate waste in time, energy, and resources. This methodology is most often seen in the manufacturing industry where increased quality and a reduction in expenses have resulted. The result for us has been a cost savings well beyond our goal, without compromising patient care.

- I, along with other leaders across our Hartford HealthCare system, have worked diligently on an initiative called "HHC Thrive." This initiative was designed to create a healthcare delivery system that is robust, flexible and well focused given the economic climate in which we must operate. Our goal was to uncover $25 M in savings opportunities across our system.

- As a result of our Thrive initiative, numerous performance improvement projects were implemented that have increased efficiency and reduced costs. Highlights include:

    - Standardization of purchasing practices and care delivery
    - Efforts around energy conservation

- Centralization of certain functions such as revenue cycle, medical records and information services
- A more structured and thorough review of budget requests, especially those related to labor
- Restructuring of employee benefits

- We have left no stone unturned when it comes to identifying cost-savings opportunities and finding efficiencies. When we set out on our Thrive journey, achieving $25 M in savings was a lofty goal that we were not sure we could meet. I am amazed by the efforts put forth through this initiative. We have truly gone above and beyond to take responsibility for how we operate and have no more room to make adjustments without compromise to our patients and our staff. We MUST avoid these drastic cuts if we are to survive and do right by those we serve.