



Office of the  
Healthcare  
Advocate  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony of Victoria Veltri  
State Healthcare Advocate  
Before the Public Health Committee  
In support of HB 5978  
February 20, 2013**

Good afternoon, Representative Johnson, Senator Gerratana, Senator Welch, Representative Srinivasan, and members of the Public Health Committee. For the record, I am Vicki Veltri, State Healthcare Advocate with the Office Healthcare Advocate ("OHA"). OHA is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

I appreciate the initiative represented by HB 5978. Although the concepts concerning patient privacy promoted by this bill are implicit in existing federal and state law and regulation, it is important to reaffirm our commitment to Connecticut's consumers. As providers become busier than ever, and with that trend projected to increase as more consumers enter the healthcare marketplace through the Health Insurance Exchange, it is critical that healthcare providers remain cognizant of the need to protect patient privacy. It is all too easy for clinical staff to discuss protected health information (PHI) with other staff or patients in public areas, even with the best interests of the patient at heart. This concept is one that most healthcare facilities currently promote staff training, a concept that HB 5978 reinforces and codifies.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver OHA's testimony today. If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at [victoria.veltri@ct.gov](mailto:victoria.veltri@ct.gov).