



**Testimony of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center
to the Public Health Committee Regarding
*Senate Bill 363 An Act Establishing An Obese Patients' Bill Of Rights.***

February 20, 2013

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts about *Senate Bill 363 An Act Establishing An Obese Patients' Bill Of Rights*. My name is Dr. Elizabeth Estrada, and I am a Pediatric Endocrinologist at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center and I am submitting this testimony in support of the proposed legislation.

Rates of childhood obesity in the US have tripled over the last generation. Studies in Connecticut indicate that almost one third of children are overweight or obese and in many urban areas rates are even higher than the national average (40% of Hartford school children and 35% - 48% of New Britain school children are overweight or obese). Being overweight or obese is far from being a simple cosmetic issue, as these children are faced with much higher risks of early hypertension, cardiovascular disease, liver and kidney damage and diabetes. Therefore, childhood obesity is a critical public health problems that threatens to undermine favorable trends in morbidity and mortality from all causes that have occurred during the past half-century. As a consequence of obesity this generation might the first that has a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Immediate action must be initiated to prevent excess weight gain and to treat children and adolescents who are already overweight. Children and adolescents at risk for developing obesity and its complications must be identified and interventions begun. Strategies must be developed that involve families, the healthcare system, healthcare insurers, government agencies, the school system, the food and entertainment industries, and public health professionals.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Jane Baird, Connecticut Children's Director of Government Relations, at 860-837-5557.