

**Testimony of Sally Hellerman, APRN, Director of Medical Services,
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England regarding
HB 6391 An Act Concerning the Practice of Advance Practice Registered Nurses.
March 20, 2013**

Good afternoon members of the Public Health Committee. I am Sally Hellerman, Director of Medical Services at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. I am an advanced practice nurse (APRN). PPSNE is the state's largest provider of family planning and reproductive health, caring for nearly 70,000 women and men annually at 17 health centers in Connecticut.

PPSNE supports HB 6391, a bill that would eliminate the need for a collaborative practice agreement between individual advanced practice nurses and supervising physicians.

At Planned Parenthood, almost all of our routine health care is delivered by advance practice nurses, in addition to physician assistants and certified nurse midwives. I oversee the work of these professionals, and can attest to the quality of their work, their commitment to excellent patient-centered care, and the collaborative nature of the way APRNs think about our relationships with the health care colleagues with whom we work.

HB 6931 acknowledges the fact that the collaborative agreement between APRN and physician is no longer necessary. Frankly, with the Affordable Care Act about to take effect, the health care delivery system needs flexibility and the ability to welcome more insured individuals and families into that system. There is going to be a significant increase in demand for services at the very health centers (like Planned Parenthoods and federally qualified health centers) where APRNs most commonly practice. Passage of HB 6931 puts Connecticut on good footing for January 2014.

Furthermore, HB 6931 will not change the way in which APRNs provide care. Our profession will continue to collaborate with all appropriate health care providers in every setting in which we work. Currently, if a physician is no longer associated with a clinician or a practice, loss of that physician can mean that patients lose immediate access to the health care that the APRN is already well equipped to provide. With the demands of the health care marketplace facing us, we cannot allow gaps in coverage or care to delay access to individuals newly covered by the ACA.

In some cases, APRNs will decide to open a health practice as a group or individually, and this, too, will be all to the good. Our professionals are well equipped to do so but are also quite mindful of our professional limitations, and such practices will have all necessary arrangements in place to refer patients with greater needs to higher levels of care. APRNs will, of course, cover their own malpractice insurance to the same limits as physicians, and members of our profession have always been solely responsible for the quality of our work as providers.

Planned Parenthood requests that you support HB 6931. Collaborative agreements are unnecessary, hinder practice and decrease access to health care for patients at a time when increased access is going to be absolutely vital for the success of the Affordable Care Act. Thank you.

