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**Testimony on Senate Bill 1038**  
**An Act Concerning The Definition of Surgery**  
**Public Health Committee**  
**March 20, 2013**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of close to 8,000 physicians and physicians in training in the state of Connecticut, thank you for the opportunity to provide this supportive testimony to you today on Senate Bill 1038 An Act Concerning the Definition of Surgery.

Due to a variety of factors the health care system in the United States is in a period of tremendous transition. The development of quality standards and guidelines, the implementation of quality improvement programs, new payment models, team-based practice models, demands by business and the public for value in the system, and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act each play a role in the changing way physicians are delivering care to our patients.

We are sensitive to the uncertainty this can create for all health care providers, and to the concerns our patients have regarding the impact of these changes on the quality and safety of the care they receive here in Connecticut.

One important way we can ensure the provision of quality surgical care in our state is through the adoption of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Definition of Surgery which was approved by the American Medical Association (AMA) (see below) and the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS). The Connecticut Chapter of the ACS fully supports the AMA adopted language as this is the definition that was agreed upon by the national medical specialty societies and this best defines surgery today in medical practice.

By codifying the definition of surgery in the Connecticut General Statutes, the General Assembly will define what constitutes surgery, who may perform surgical procedures on patients, and which entities are appropriate to monitor and ensure patient safety and quality here in Connecticut. This is especially important considering the current emphasis on team-based care, where many health care professionals come together to provide the very best care to the patient.

While we fully support the team based care approach, we believe that a clear understanding of the roles of each team member is critical to assure that teams function properly and provide patients with the best care possible.



It should be clearly noted that adoption of this definition does not limit procedures currently allowed by State Statute to be performed by allied health professionals. It also does not limit or attempt to define procedures performed by different physicians practicing within their professionally accepted scope. It is intended to be an effective way to help ensure patients are receiving safe and properly regulated surgical procedures as medical practice evolves and advances tied to state and federal health care reform.

In 2012, the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Surgeons Professional Association, Inc. (CTACSPA) formed the Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative (CtSQC) to provide a forum in which surgeons can share knowledge and best practices in the treatment of surgical patients in Connecticut. Since its formation the CtSQC has grown to include 18 hospitals, many of which are using the American College of Surgeons risk-adjusted National Surgical Quality Improvement Database (NSQIP) as their data gathering tool to fuel their quality improvement programs.

The Chapter and CSMS believe that having the ACS/AMA Definition of Surgery codified in the Connecticut General Statutes is an integral part of the continuing quality improvement efforts that are at the core of the many changes we are seeing in healthcare today in Connecticut. Without codifying this definition, too much would be left to interpretation and debate moving forward at a time when we need to be focusing on how to measure and then improve the care that is provided so that we can really get to what matters most- improving outcomes for our patients.

Therefore, we ask you to support S.B.1038 with the favorable language change to the ACS Definition of Surgery as Adopted by the AMA in their policy H-475.983.

#### **H-475.983 Definition of Surgery**

Our AMA adopts the following definition of "surgery" from American College of Surgeons Statement ST-11:

Surgery is performed for the purpose of structurally altering the human body by the incision or destruction of tissues and is part of the practice of medicine. Surgery also is the diagnostic or therapeutic treatment of conditions or disease processes by any instruments causing localized alteration or transposition of live human tissue which include lasers, ultrasound, ionizing radiation, scalpels, probes, and needles. The tissue can be cut, burned, vaporized, frozen, sutured, probed, or manipulated by closed reductions for major dislocations or fractures, or otherwise altered by mechanical, thermal, light-based, electromagnetic, or chemical means. Injection of diagnostic or therapeutic substances into body cavities, internal organs, joints, sensory organs, and the central nervous system also is considered to be surgery (this does not include the administration by nursing personnel of some injections, subcutaneous, intramuscular, and intravenous, when ordered by a physician). All of these surgical procedures are invasive, including those that are performed with lasers, and the risks of any surgical procedure are not eliminated by using a light knife or laser in place of a metal knife, or scalpel.

Patient safety and quality of care are paramount and, therefore, patients should be assured that individuals who perform these types of surgery are licensed physicians (defined as doctors of medicine or osteopathy) who meet appropriate professional standards. (Res. 212; A-07)



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CONNECTICUT CHAPTER  
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Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today in support of SB 1038 with amended language as suggested in this testimony.