

**TESTIMONY OF
KRISTINE LISI, MD
MEDICAL DIRECTOR
ST. VINCENT'S HEALTH CENTER
CLINIC OF ST. VINCENT'S MEDICAL CENTER
BEFORE THE FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 13, 2014
SB 368, An Act Phasing Out The Hospital Tax**

My name is Dr. Kristine Lisi, and I am the Medical Director at Saint Vincent's Health Center, the clinic run by St. Vincent's Medical Center. I am here to support SB 368, An Act Phasing Out The Hospital Tax.

Our mission at the Saint Vincent's Family Health Center is to care for the poor and underserved – we had 25,000 patient visits last year alone. The patients we serve are largely people without insurance or who are underinsured or on Medicaid. We serve as a primary care facility for so many in our community.

The whole healthcare system is strained right now, and the hospital tax makes it worse.

Every day I see patients in our clinic for follow up after a hospital admission. Many of these patients have severe medical conditions and are discharged on medications that need to be filled from that admission. But when they go to the pharmacy to purchase these medications, they find that the drugs they need to remain healthy are out of their reach financially.

It happens for patients with diabetes who can't afford insulin – they end up right back in the hospital because they never filled their prescriptions. It happens for people with high blood pressure, a condition for which even generic medications are expensive. Some of these patients have such major health issues as a result of not being able to afford their medications, they have to be rushed back to the hospital from our clinic.

As you can imagine, there is a waiting list to see a Primary Care provider and an even longer wait to see a specialist. We refer people to the specialty services they need. Nobody is denied, but they have a long wait: six months for a colonoscopy, and six months for a rheumatologist.

My concern is what happens to our communities when the healthcare safety net is stretched as far as it can go. From the front lines, I can tell you that hurts me, as a doctor, to see a patient in need and make them wait for care. The state of

Connecticut needs to invest in healthcare and not tax hospitals funds they would have used to further patient care.

We need those dollars to care for patients. Help support SB 368 and help us phase down the hospital tax. Thank you for your consideration.