



WESTERN CONNECTICUT
HEALTH NETWORK

DANBURY HOSPITAL • NEW MILFORD HOSPITAL



**Written Testimony of Matthew Cassavechia, EMT-P
Western CT Health Network
(Danbury, Norwalk and New Milford Hospitals)
for the Human Services Committee Tuesday, March 11, 2014**

I am Matthew Cassavechia, Director of Emergency Medical Services at the Western CT Health Network and I am here to testify in support of SB 407, *An Act Concerning A Hospital Quality Of Care Initiative*.

Western CT Health Network, now including Danbury Hospital, New Milford Hospital and Norwalk Hospital, is a mission-driven, not-for-profit health care network. My colleagues and I come to work each day focused on one thing, and that is to do our very best to care for those that need our help. We remain focused on that one important thing despite funding cuts, stretched resources, sometimes burdensome regulations, new data collection and oversight requirements *all* within a rapidly changing health care industry.

As a trained paramedic, I see the emergency medical needs in our community every day. Patients call for us that are sick or injured with expanding complexity because of a variety of health care issues in their lives including trying to make a life and a living in a down economy. The community we serve is incredibly diverse with more than 50 languages spoken in the Danbury schools and an undocumented population estimated at more than 20,000 people.

As an employee of the Western CT Health Network, I know our hospitals are committed to serving the health care needs of our community.

- I know that our hospitals work to improve access through community partnerships, cultural competency and skills-building and by promoting Access Health CT, CT's new insurance exchange.
- I know that we are implementing patient navigators and medical home primary care models throughout our network of providers.
- I know and am involved in developing programs to address the needs of individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues who are using the ED inappropriately to receive their care.
- I know and am involved with regional community organizations to develop community care teams to identify and wrap services around those who are identified as homeless or at risk for being homeless.
- I know that every day, we come to work to do a better job than yesterday.
- I know that the intent of our advocacy for Medicaid redesign is to improve the current system for those that need our help.

The Senate Bill 407 is an innovative solution that improves the situation and the quality of care by redesigning the Medicaid program with an enhanced focus on our patients. There is value in this proposal that would reward hospitals for achieving quality objectives and investing in critical infrastructure to make care more effective, as well as for participating in programs to share data and improve care outcomes.

This is a great opportunity to make healthcare better for some of our most vulnerable and needy people at a lower cost. I've been told that other states have addressed these same challenges in thoughtful and creative ways. I'd like to believe if we work together, Connecticut can do this too. Please support SB 407 as a critical piece of legislation for our collective future. Thank you for your consideration and your support so we may continue to do the same for the community we are charged to serve.

Matthew Cassavechia, Western CT Health Network