



March 4, 2014

Re: In support of SB-325 (LCO 1369) - An Act Concerning Medicaid Recipients with Complex Medical Needs

Dear Human Services Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today about SB 325, a bill of extreme importance to the Medicaid beneficiaries in Connecticut. My name is Frank Biondello, Executive Vice President for Numotion. Numotion is a national provider of complex rehab technology, or CRT with our corporate headquarters in Rocky Hill, CT. Numotion employs over 2000 people nationally including 200 employees in CT. We service customers in 43 states from over 100 branch locations across the country. Numotion has been providing CRT products and services to the Medicaid community in Connecticut for over twenty years. I am lifelong resident of CT and currently reside in Glastonbury, CT.

I wholeheartedly support SB 325. I am concerned that if the current reimbursement for customized wheelchairs and other complex rehab technology remain as is, we will see a compromise with access to these much needed products and services. In today's Connecticut Medicaid landscape, Numotion is one of two companies in the state providing an estimated 90% of the complex rehab technology services. This small number of companies servicing the CT CRT Medicaid population is directly linked to a nationwide epidemic of complex rehab technology providers having to close their doors as a result of poor reimbursement and inadequate coverage guidelines.

Complex rehab technology is a very specialized subsection of the broad durable medical equipment benefit. Congress recognized the need to protect access to these much needed products and services and in 2008 passed HR 6331, which exempted CRT from Medicare competitive bidding. However, the customized wheelchairs and other CRT devices we provide are frequently and erroneously lumped in with durable medical equipment by Medicaid when there are rate reductions or updates to coverage criteria. Without separating the CRT sector from the broad base of durable medical equipment, these across the board changes have threatened access to thousands of CT Medicaid recipients who depend on CRT equipment and services.

Why, you may ask, is there a need for the Medicaid reimbursement to be increased from where it is now? Currently, Connecticut Medicaid reimburses complex rehab technology at rates that are **significantly below the Medicare rate**. Connecticut Medicaid is one of the lowest paying Medicaid plans in the country for not only new equipment but also for providing ongoing service and repairs for that equipment. Providers like Numotion are seeing increases in cost of doing business while being issued decreases in reimbursement for our services. Unlike other service industries that most of us are familiar with, such as appliance repair or phone and cable companies, our industry does not get reimbursed a trip charge or service fee. Servicing these customized mobility devices is not a money maker for us, on

the contrary in most cases it is a loss for us due to the high cost of doing business as a CRT company. The products provided under the complex rehab technology benefit are created for allowing these individuals with permanent medical conditions to have the customized, highly specialized wheelchairs that enable them to be mobile and independent.

Please support SB 325, as I do, so that complex rehab technology can be evaluated independently of the durable medical equipment benefit. The passage of SB 325 would prevent access to care issues. Let's make sure that we continue to support the mobility needs of the most medically fragile population in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Frank P. Biondello". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "F".

Frank Biondello
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