



Office of the
Healthcare
Advocate
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony of Victoria Veltri
State Healthcare Advocate
Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee
In Support of HB 5257
February 27, 2014**

Good afternoon, Representative Tercyak, Senator Osten, Senator Markley, Representative Smith, and members of the labor and Public Employees Committee. For the record, I am Vicki Veltri, State Healthcare Advocate with the Office Healthcare Advocate ("OHA"). OHA is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

House Bill 5257 strives to promote and protect consumer interests by codifying the importance of transparency in these acquisitions and ensuring a stable workforce capable of maintaining an effective clinical environment for the delivery of healthcare services. Given the market consolidation that has taken place over the last several years, with independent provider practices merging with hospital system increasingly often, Connecticut's small and unique healthcare market is at risk of limiting consumer choice and decreasing competition. While this practice may be reasonable and appropriate in many instances, it is more and more important that some measure of transparency remains, as this trend can have a substantial impact on the quality, cost and access to medical services.

In addition, the requirement that a minimum of three public hearings in the affected communities occur supports the pursuit of transparency by providing those affected by the proposed conversion to publically share their concerns, as well as question the involved parties about the specific impact on the hospital and community.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver OHA's testimony today. If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at victoria.veltri@ct.gov.