



**Testimony of Victoria Veltri
State Healthcare Advocate
Before the Public Health Committee
In support of SB 35
March 6, 2014**

Good afternoon, Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health 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 plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

I would like to testify in support of SB 35, An Act Concerning Notice of Acquisitions, Joint Ventures and Affiliations of Group Medical Practices. As the costs of healthcare continue to rise, so does the cost of healthcare delivery. This is especially notable and impactful for independent providers and practices, resulting in an increasing predilection towards consolidation in order to remain solvent and competitive. However, the healthcare market in Connecticut is unique, with distinct regions within our relatively small state, each with distinct healthcare needs and challenges. This trend towards consolidation threatens to limit consumer choice and, ironically, decrease competition.

SB 35 addresses this trend by requiring that group practices provide notice to the Attorney General of its intent to merge with another practice or hospital system. Such notice provides the Attorney General with an opportunity to investigate the proposed merger and assess whether the proposal would have an anti-competitive effect on the primary service area or the state.

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.