STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER
55 ELM STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
06106-1775

Kevin Lembo
State Comptroller

Martha Carlson
Deputy Comptroller

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
Kevin Lembo
State Comptroller

Concerning H.B. 5571 An Act Concerning Certificate of Need Requirements, Hospital Conversions and Medical Foundations

March 19, 2014

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, Representative Srinivasan and Members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of *H.B. 5571 An Act Concerning Certificate of Need Requirements, Hospital Conversions and Medical Foundations.*

The health care delivery landscape in Connecticut and across the country is changing rapidly. Hospitals are merging with each other and private providers to form hospital systems across the state. The rapidly changing landscape requires state oversight to ensure community interests are protected and access to vital services is not put at risk.

Recently, reproductive services were put at risk in the Waterbury region by a proposed merger of Waterbury Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital and LHP Partners, a national for-profit hospital system. The merger would have resulted in significant and unacceptable limits on reproductive health services in the Waterbury area. Ultimately, the merger did not go forward, but the exercise did highlight a weakness in protecting access to reproductive health services in Connecticut's statutes.

Currently, hospitals and other facilities are not explicitly required to go through the state's rigorous certificate of need process (CON) when discontinuing reproductive health services, which can lead to impediments to health care needed by our communities. This bill will add reproductive health services to the list of services that explicitly require a CON before a facility can discontinue services.

Other vital community services, including mental health and substance abuse services, are already explicitly covered by the state's CON process. By adding reproductive health services, the state's Office of Health Care Access will have clear responsibility to

review community access to these services and determine if adequate alternatives exist in the community before a hospital or facility can discontinue providing services.

This legislation will help to ensure that community access to reproductive health services will not be put at risk by hospital mergers or conversions in the future.

I hope the committee will support its passage.