



**TESTIMONY OF
St. Vincent's Health Services
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 19, 2014**

SB 460, An Act Concerning Hospital Conversions And Other Matters Affecting Hospitals

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of St. Vincent's Medical Center regarding **SB 460, An Act Concerning Hospital Conversions And Other Matters Affecting Hospitals**. We oppose the passing of this bill.

Currently, there are hospital conversion laws in place in the State of Connecticut, as well as a strong Certificate of Need process. For year, hospitals have been subject to these requirements and have complied, and agree that our current regulatory environment exists to preserve patient access, safety and quality of care.

The healthcare landscape is changing significantly, and as a result, hospitals and healthcare systems are organizing in order to identify ways to increase value for patients, cut waste and become more efficient and effective as we navigate the changes.

Together, we must ensure that hospitals can be flexible and make the changes necessary to our operating models and create strategic partnerships to create new, sustainable healthcare business models. We must achieve the goals of improved quality and reduced costs in today's changing healthcare environment and to do so, have the flexibility to be creative in our strategies.

For example, population health management requires that we collaborate closely with physicians, and form partnerships with organizations in the communities we serve. While some hospitals may make the decision to convert to a for-profit status as one method of sustainability, others will form close affiliations, allowing access to necessary capital, efficiencies in purchasing and other cost reduction opportunities, reduction of duplicated services and improved quality. Working together, hospitals and other partners can share data in order to manage populations and add value to the care that patients will receive.

The proposed increase in regulatory requirements set out in SB460 is significant, and reduces the ability that hospitals have to be flexible and agile during this rapidly changing healthcare environment. The burden of added information and data that is necessary, along with the approval process, essentially places a "freeze" on the state of healthcare in Connecticut today. It does not take into consideration the changes as described above that must take place in order for Connecticut residents to have healthy, thriving, innovative and patient-centered hospitals.

St. Vincent's Medical Center is committed to improving patient care and ensuring that every person receives safe, excellent care. In fact, St. Vincent's has transformed its clinical practices over the last several years, mandating a "high reliability" safety training program for every employee regardless of position. The implementation of the safety program has resulted in numerous awards for St. Vincent's, including four consecutive "A" Hospital Safety Score™ designations by Leapfrog and ranking as Best Hospital in Fairfield County and in all of Western Connecticut for 2013-2014 by U.S. News & World Report in its annual "Best Hospitals" survey. In addition, in 2012, St. Vincent's Medical Center became the only Fairfield County hospital to achieve Magnet® recognition from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. St. Vincent's has also been featured by the Joint Commission as a model of a high reliability organization.

We're driving toward the healthcare reform objective of improving care quality and accountability, and the shift from payment for the volume of services provided to payment for value – focusing on the outcomes and quality of care people receive. We must be able to make decisions regarding the strategies we will use to create and maintain a sustainable model to ensure quality and value for our patients.

Thank you for your consideration of our position and our request that you voice your opposition to SB 460.

The residents of Connecticut are depending on you.