



Office of the  
Healthcare  
Advocate  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony of Victoria Veltri  
State Healthcare Advocate  
Before the Program Review and Investigations Committee  
In support of HB 5378  
March 4, 2014**

Good afternoon, Senator Kissel, Representative Mushinsky, Senator Fonfara, Representative Carpino, and members of the Program Review and Investigation 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 thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 5378, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee Medicaid-Funded Emergency Department Visits. The requirement that intensive care management be integrated into Medicaid recipient's treatment and care supports a critically important element in effective health management. As Connecticut continues to develop and implement health reforms and innovations to improve consumer access to and quality of care, codifying the principles of intensive care management that are already integrated into several Medicaid programs. Care management serves an important function in consumer access to effective treatment while maximizing existing resources. Indeed, the experience of consumers already benefitting from existing efforts of the Medicaid ASO to promote effective coordination of care and intensive care management reinforce this premise.

The telehealth demonstration project proposed by HB 5378 promotes this concept by requiring Medicaid coverage of services delivered via telemedicine and is an important element in the development of a comprehensive, equitable and innovative delivery and reimbursement model. From increased informed decision making capability and enhanced quality of care, telemedicine has the potential to save lives through increased consumer access to their providers for routine, chronic or acute care, resulting in earlier diagnoses and intervention. As individuals integrate the digital environment into their lives, telemedicine represents a logical extension of this trend, and it is reasonable that Connecticut should be at the forefront of this movement.

Finally, HB 5378's requirement that the DSS assess network adequacy for Medicaid recipients will provide invaluable data concerning the current medical environment and patient access to necessary care. By confirming the availability of the Medicaid provider network, we gain crucial insights into the needs of consumers and areas where networks may not be adequate to provide necessary treatment for members.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver OHA's testimony today. We look forward to continuing to collaborate and advocate for the consumers of Connecticut in this important matter. If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at [victoria.veltri@ct.gov](mailto:victoria.veltri@ct.gov).