



February 20, 2014

Written testimony of Steven Vera, Regional Director of Operations, Regency Healthcare Management with facilities located in Danielson, New Britain, Norwich, Stamford and Windham
Concerning:

S.B. No. 104 (RAISED) AN ACT PROVIDING FINANCIAL RELIEF TO NURSING HOMES FOR UNCOMPENSATED CARE.

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and to the members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Steven Vera. I am the Regional Director of Operations for Regency Healthcare Management with facilities in in Danielson, New Britain, Norwich, Stamford and Windham. Each of my facilities is a longstanding provider of nursing care in their respective communities with a total of 674 beds, 800 employees and winners of the American Health Care Association Quality Awards. I have provided this written testimony this afternoon to ask the Human Services Committee to ask for your support for S.B. No. 104 (RAISED) AN ACT PROVIDING FINANCIAL RELIEF TO NURSING HOMES FOR UNCOMPENSATED CARE. This bill is being advanced by the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF), of which our organization is a member.

This legislation is badly needed to address the persistent and worsening problem of excessive delays in the long term care Medicaid eligibility determination process at the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) for skilled nursing facilities. Connecticut skilled nursing facilities and their residents are harmed by excessive delays in the eligibility determination process. As Medicaid applicants residing in nursing facilities await final disposition of their requests for state help, Connecticut nursing homes are simultaneously providing uncompensated care for periods of time often exceeding federal standard of promptness rules. This bill addresses this situation by requiring advanced payments for the money owed by the state. The bill also addresses the fundamental unfairness of requiring nursing facilities to pay provider taxes, penalties, interest and fees for care provided to Medicaid applicants and recipients, when no payment is being received from Medicaid for providing care due to excessive delays.

Our nursing home is harmed by these excessive Medicaid eligibility and payment delays. With Medicaid as the primary payer for 82% of our residents, these delays create significant cash flow problems for our organization with the need to meet weekly payrolls and health insurance payments on a monthly basis. CAHCF applauds and encourages the DSS efforts to modernize its eligibility systems and for their commitment to hire badly-needed eligibility staff to address delays across the entire public and medical assistance spectrum. However, the state's initiatives are not yet providing relief, and we are concerned the situation may continue to worsen. Please pass this bill. Our nursing home needs your help.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.