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DANBURY HOSPITAL • NEW MILFORD HOSPITAL



Written Testimony of Rowena Rosenblum-Bergmans
Western CT Health Network
(Danbury, Norwalk and New Milford Hospitals)
for the Human Services Committee Tuesday, March 11, 2014

I am in support of SB 407, *An Act Concerning A Hospital Quality Of Care Initiative*. SB 407 is a critical piece of legislation that would allow hospitals to meet the demands of reform in a progressive way that serves at-risk patients and holds caregivers accountable for providing high-value, high quality care.

In our progressive organization, clinicians and administration interact and plan on a daily basis regarding complex patient care needs. Planning for the longer term however, has become increasingly difficult with unexpected cuts coming at hospitals from State and Federal leaders, causing great harm to our organizations, our staff and our community. These cuts forced us to make difficult decisions affecting programs and people to minimize the impact to patient care. We reduced employee salaries and benefits, eliminated or reduced some services, and postponed investments in technology and infrastructure – all reducing our impact on the local economy.

Yet, we persevered and are continuing to work on caring for those that need our help by improving access through community partnerships, cultural competency and skills-building and by promoting Access Health CT, CT's new insurance exchange. We are implementing patient navigators and medical home primary care models throughout our network of providers and developing programs to address the needs of individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues who are using the ED inappropriately to receive their care. We have partnered with regional community organizations to develop community care teams to identify and wrap services around those who are identified as homeless or at risk for being homeless. Our partnerships with community-based clinics and providers, such as the local Federally Qualified Health Center, strengthen the continuum of care and services offered for people who need our help and at the same time, provide higher-value care.

SB 407 is an innovative solution that improves the situation and the quality of care by redesigning the Medicaid program with an enhanced focus on our patients. This is a value-based proposal that would reward hospitals for achieving quality objectives and investing in infrastructure to make care more effective, as well as for participating in programs to improve outcomes and share data.

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 view this as a challenge, a responsibility, and a great opportunity to make healthcare better at a lower cost. We know other states have addressed these same challenges in thoughtful and creative ways. Together, we can do the same.

SB 407 is a critical piece of legislation that would allow hospitals to implement reform and meet the needs of at-risk patients in a progressive way where everyone wins – especially our patients.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Rowena Rosenblum-Bergmans
Vice President Clinical Integration and Population Health
Western CT Health Network