



**TESTIMONY OF  
LAWRENCE + MEMORIAL HOSPITAL  
NEW LONDON, CT  
SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
FEBRUARY 27, 2015**

**HB 6824, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING  
JUNE 30, 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR  
AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE**

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning HB 6824, An Act Concerning The State budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefore And Other Provisions Related to Revenue.

Good evening, I am Ron Kersey, Coordinator for Emergency Medical Services and Manager of the Paramedic Intercept Program at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital, where I have worked in Emergency Medical Services in some capacity for more than the past quarter century.

While I do have administrative responsibilities, I still responded with our intercept unit, I still provide care at the scene of an emergency and I still ride in the back of ambulances with patients on their way to our Emergency Room.

Yes, there are times when we're called off before we even arrive at the scene of an emergency. However, there are just as many times when our services are required. And without exaggerating or being melodramatic, yes, there are times when our being there for our patients will mean the difference between life and death.

Due to reimbursement cuts and a gross receipts tax already enacted by state government during the past four years, our hospital is in a challenged fiscal condition. We have laid off roughly 75 people since then and dozens more positions have been cut through attrition.

Now, for the first time since the inception of our Paramedic program in 1988, we are forced to approach the municipalities we serve to ask them to supplement the cost of this vital program. We are sensitive to the fiscal stresses these cities and towns face themselves, so this is not an easy request. The likely alternative, however, is that our Paramedic program goes away and leaves the seven cities and towns we now serve to fend for themselves at far greater cost and far greater risk to life and limb.

The Paramedic program at L+M Hospital is one of only two hospital-based Paramedic response programs that have not been supplemented by the municipalities we have served for the past 25 years. That is about to change, however, because this important, sometimes life-saving service is now running an annual deficit of as much as \$500,000. Once upon a time, the hospital was able to absorb this loss. Not any more, however.

We have aggressively attempted to manage costs despite tremendous increases in volume and community requests. Unfortunately, the steady decline in government reimbursements and imposition of taxes has now forced us to reach out for the first time to the communities we serve.

This is a troublesome trend, and one that we don't want to continue. Our request has left the leaders of these municipalities wondering if they can find the additional money to help keep this vital program afloat, and if so, where?

In closing, please reject the proposed tax increase on hospitals and fund Medicaid reimbursement to realistic levels so that we can continue to do what we do best – care for our patients. Thank you!