



**TESTIMONY OF
LUCILLE BENTLEY, RN
DIRECTOR OF THE FAMILY HEALTH CENTER
ST. VINCENT'S MEDICAL CENTER
SUBMITTED TO THE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Friday, February 27, 2015**

**HB 6824, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending
June Thirtieth 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefor And Other
Provisions Related To Revenue**

My name is Lucille Bentley. I am a registered nurse and have served as Director of the Family Health Center at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport for five years.

When we talk about health care dollars, we're really talking about people, and I'd like to tell you a little about the people we see at our Center. We take care of patients of all ages – children, adolescents, adults, and senior citizens – who are either underinsured or uninsured. Some are undocumented. About 50% are on Medicaid, about 20% are on Medicare, and the rest are either self-pay or charity care. We give out a significant amount of charity care.

We treat more than 20,000 individuals each year. For most of the patients we see, we are their primary healthcare providers. Our patients are so thankful that the Family Health Center is here for them. They depend on us to treat their illnesses and to help keep them healthy. Members of the Family Health Center staff and other caregivers at St. Vincent's also go out into the community to teach people about the importance of prevention and early detection.

In addition to our primary care services, an essential part of the care we provide at The Family Health Center is our specialty clinics. Specialists in cardiology, orthopedics, gastrointestinal medicine, endocrinology, rheumatology and more come to our clinic each month to provide specialty care for our patients. I am concerned that ongoing fiscal constraints are putting these specialty services – and perhaps our entire clinic – in jeopardy.

The Family Health Center does not make any money for the hospital. We offer the Center simply because it is needed. If hospitals had to cut back on services such as ours due to government underfunding or the hospital tax, it would have a



devastating impact on the neediest patients in our communities. I fear these patients would wait until they were very ill and then need to seek care through our emergency departments instead, which would be much more costly in terms of the financial impact as well as on our patients' health.

Our patients are so grateful to us for the care we provide. We, as caregivers, would be equally grateful to you in return, for your support of our hospitals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.