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From: Dominic Cotton
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 8:05 PM
To: Dominic Cotton, Fr. Russ Carmichael olb. OSB

Testimony in Support of the Eldercare Waiver
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Good Morning Rep. Walker, Rep. Abercrombie, Senator Bye, Senator Moore and esteemed members of Human Services and Appropriations committees.

I am here to testify in support of the renewal of the Eldercare Waiver. The Medicaid waiver system is an important tool in ensuring that persons can remain in their communities and homes where they are comfortable and familiar. Waivers are an important in helping to rebalance the nursing home populations from an institutional model to community based. These waivers save the State of Connecticut money and insure dignity for the populations served.

In understanding the importance of these services to allow people to age in place I would also like to bring attention to the process in which waiver programs are renewed and amended. In the past these public hearings have garnered little attention from communities as changes were minimal and most were looking for an increase in available slots. Additionally many participants were not even aware of changes as they are posted in the CT Law Journal that is inaccessible to citizens. As these programs change to address the needs of participants and the economic environment of the State, we believe it is imperative that participants have an opportunity to be included in the decision making process. Transparency and communication on behalf of the Department of Social Service to participants is key to the continued success of the waiver program. Waiver Participant involvement needs to be more than a box that is checked off.

To that end we fully endorse HB 6155 a bill designed to address the issues of communication and waiver participant involvement by having the Department of Social Service directly notify people when waivers are to be amended or renewed. This bill also ensures that there is an appropriate time period for public comment. As we engage the department in feedback on proposals we can avoid possible oversights to these programs. In the end result we are looking for the Department of Social Services and other agencies to be inclusive in their decisions and work with us instead of making assumptions and designing programs for us.

We also have reservations over the Department of Social Services outsourcing of the frontline administration

of these Waiver programs as has occurred with the Eldercare, PCA, and a Pilot Program for the ABI waiver. We understand the States need to conserve or seek additional funds from the federal government as these programs grow as a result of rebalancing. We have been accustomed to dealing directly with DSS Social workers and are concerned that new agencies will not have the same level of direct accountability. As we move forward our hopes are that the Department of Social Service will engage in the decision making process with various Waiver Advisory Committees .

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services have taken steps to ensure that Waiver Programs are more Person Centered, inclusive, and respect rights. We are asking for the State of Connecticut to ensure that they are at the forefront of upholding the same principles in the decision making process of waiver amendments and renewals

In closing I would like to thank the Chairs and members of Human Service for all their work on HB6155 and urge the Appropriations Committee to support the bill. I would also like to thank the Commissioner of DSS for the increased level of transparency we have observed over the past year with regards to the Waiver Programs. Thank you for all of your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely, Dominic M. Cotton MHA