

Connecticut Nurses Association

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TESTIMONY RE: Proposed SB 16
AN ACT CONCERNING BENEFITS PAYABLE FOR ASSESSMENTS TO DETERMINE A
DIAGNOSIS OF A MENTAL OR NERVOUS CONDITION AND RELATED CONSULTATIONS

COMMITTEE ON INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE
FEBURARY 17,2015

Good, Senator Crisco and Representative Megna and esteemed members of the
Committee on Insurance and Real Estate.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony related to Proposed SB 16 AN ACT
CONCERNING BENEFITS PAYABLE FOR ASSESSMENTS TO DETERMINE A DIAGNOSIS OF A
MENTAL OR NERVOUS CONDITION AND RELATED CONSULTATIONS

My name is Danielle Morgan and I am a Family Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner. Since
graduating from Yale in 2000, I have been providing psychiatric evaluation, medication
management, psychotherapy, and psychiatric consultation for thousands of mentally ill
residents throughout Connecticut. I have been credentialed with several commercial
insurance companies since 2000 and have worked in community based mental health
clinics as a Medicaid provider serving our more indigent population for the same period
of time. Additionally, I have a private practice in New Haven where I see approximately
600 patients for psychiatric services.

Mental health coverage, as defined by third party payor systems, lacks parity when
compared with physical health coverage in so many ways. I was thrilled to see this bill
boldly address two of these and bring parity, and ultimately dignity, to the psychiatric
treatment process. Prohibiting limits on the number of assessment visits as well as

requiring health insurance coverage for consultations throughout the assessment process is a welcome respect to the work of the psychiatric diagnostic process.

Psychiatric providers across the state thank you for the respect extended to us, our time, and our work by this bill.

While comprehensive of all other types of trained psychiatric providers, psychiatric APRNs are a provider population not defined/included in the language of this bill. I am most concerned about this as we can be currently found providing, arguably, the bulk of the third-party-reimbursed care in Connecticut. As more and more psychiatrists exit the insurance panels, psychiatric APRNs are left providing the bulk of this commercially covered/third party payor psychiatric evaluation, medication management, and ongoing psychiatric treatment around the state.

Additionally, psychiatric APRNs provide the bulk of the staffing at community mental health centers, serving our Medicaid population, where we are called upon to provide psychiatric evaluation, medication management, and psychiatric consultation. I'm told UCONN, our state's largest mental health service provider for our most indigent population offers the vast majority of these services via their staff psychiatric APRNs.

Psychiatric APRNs function in every area of mental health delivery across the state: we conducting psychiatric evaluations in the psychiatric pediatric emergency room; we are conducting evaluations in the adult psychiatric emergency room; we are attending APRNs on the psychiatric inpatient units; we staff the consultation-liason service in the hospital; we can be found in private practices; small clinics; large clinics; DOC facilities; DCF facilities; community mental health centers; shelters; community outreach vans. Any where that psychiatric healthcare can be delivered, psychiatric APRNs are providing it.

After careful consideration and understanding the intent of this proposed legislation it is essential for the committee to consider adding 'psychiatric APRNs' to the language of

provider groups defined in SB16. We are a viable, essential, and currently functional part of every aspect of the mental health care delivery system in Connecticut. We look forward to enjoying the beginning of parity with the rest of the health care delivery system that inclusion in this bill will offer.

I am very happy to discuss this process with you and experts in the field in order to develop sound legislation that includes all essential providers. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Warmest Regards,

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