



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES**  
*A Healthcare Service Agency*

**DANNEL P. MALLOY**  
GOVERNOR

**MIRIAM DELPHIN-RITTMON, PH.D.**  
COMMISSIONER

**Testimony by Nancy Navarretta,  
Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
Before the Government Administration and Election Committee**

Good Afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. I am Deputy Commissioner Nancy Navarretta of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and I am here today to voice my concerns regarding HB 5499 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL RECORDS AND ACCESS TO RESTRICTED RECORDS IN THE STATE ARCHIVES. I want to thank the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you about this proposed bill.

DMHAS is a health care agency providing services to individuals with psychiatric disabilities and substance use disorders. The individuals we serve come to state hospitals for care when they are unable to be managed in a general hospital setting or when they need intermediate to long-term care. Most often our clients are poor, and have chronic diseases which require, like any other chronic disease, ongoing care. If these individuals had the means to be treated in a private setting, their health care information would be not archived and maintained for posterity.

In order to maintain privacy protections, we would ask that you remove the language in Section 2(c) of the proposal. Removal of that language would continue to protect the privacy of health care records belonging to individuals served by the state. Currently, the department receives many requests for patient records. With properly signed releases and the ability to redact identifying information we can and do allow access to health care information in certain circumstances. Sometimes, however, we must deny access to those records and we do so by citing numerous state and federal confidentiality laws.

Though the individuals HB 5499 refers to are deceased, it is our firm belief that records of this nature are sensitive. It should not be the case that because your illness and social circumstances were such that they required you to seek state services, that your health records could be maintained by the state librarian and subject to public disclosure without redaction.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee on this important issue. I would be happy to answer any question you may have at this time.