



**Testimony of the Office of the Healthcare Advocate
Before the Human Services Committee
Re HB 5587
March 8, 2016**

Good afternoon, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Moore, Senator Markley, Representative Wood and members of the Human Services Committee. For the record, the Office Healthcare Advocate (“OHA”) is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 5587, An Act Establishing A Council To Make Recommendations Concerning Services For Children And Young Adults With Developmental Disabilities.

Individuals with a developmental disability and their families often struggle to navigate myriad of programs and services available to them. However, gaps in this persist, and challenges with care coordination and transitions between services continue to limit the effectiveness of available programs and each individual’s ability to achieve maximal progress. HB 5587 promotes a collaborative approach to this problem, engaging key stakeholders to assess and recommend opportunities to enhance this delivery and care system.

This is very similar to the concepts promoted in SB 17. We have been working collaboratively with the Office of Policy and Management to merge these efforts, and are

refining substitute language for SB 17 that incorporates key aspects of HB 5587. OHA is confident that this mutual commitment to improving the current system available to those with a developmental or intellectual disability.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver OHA's testimony today. If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at demian.fontanella@ct.gov.