



Office of the
Healthcare
Advocate
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Testimony of the Office of the Healthcare Advocate
Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Re SB 160
March 1, 2016

Good afternoon, Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, Senator Kelly, Representative Sampson, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. For the record, the Office Healthcare Advocate (“OHA”) is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring 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 in support of SB 160, AAC Insureds’ Access To Health Insurers for the Processing of Certain Prior Authorization Requests. This important measure addresses the uncommon, but critical, situation where a newborn or mother may need to be emergently transferred to a hospital other than the one where the child was delivered. During this critical time, when either the mother or the newborn may be very medically fragile or facing a dire prognosis, time is of the essence. While the medical provider’s primary responsibility is, and should, be to treat the critical patient, the importance of facilitating the connection between a mother and her newborn cannot be understated.

SB 160 proposes a common sense solution to help minimize administrative barriers to keeping mother and child together by ensuring that, for those plans that require prior authorization for inter-hospital transfers, the insurer has staff available to receive, review and approve the transfer request at any time. This does not impose additional mandated coverage on plans – it merely requires that for those plans with this type of prior authorization requirement, unnecessary delays seeking and receiving approval of a transfer do not result in extended separation of the mother and her child in circumstances where one of them may be critically ill.

If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at demian.fontanella@ct.gov.