



**Testimony of the Office of the Healthcare Advocate  
Before the Public Health Committee  
Re SB 289  
March 2, 2016**

Good morning, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan, and members of the Public Health Committee. For the record, I am Demian Fontanella, General Counsel for the Office Healthcare Advocate (“OHA”). 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 insurance plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

I come before you today to comment on SB 289, AAC Health Care Services, specifically the proposed modifications to the notice requirements codified in Sections 2 & 3 of Public Act 15-146. Connecticut made great strides in promoting greater transparency in healthcare transactions for consumers. The required notices provide consumers with invaluable information about the cost of the medical services so that they make an informed decision about whether they are willing or able of managing the financial costs. By permitting hospitals to substitute the currently required written notice with a general informational page on the hospital’s website degrades this transparency, making it less likely that consumer will know where to look, or how to identify their expected costs.

In addition, exempting unscheduled admissions, procedures, services, or those admissions, procedures, and services scheduled less than three days prior to their occurrence, from these notice requirements further deprives consumers of the necessary information with which to make an informed choice about

their care. It's important to remember that these notices are only required under current law for a relatively small number of the most common procedures and services, as detailed in C.G.S. 38a-1084a(c), so the provision of this cost information should pose no significant burden to hospitals.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver OHA's testimony today. We look forward to continuing to collaborate and advocate for the consumers of Connecticut in this important matter.

If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at [demian.fontanella@ct.gov](mailto:demian.fontanella@ct.gov).