

**TESTIMONY OF  
Catherine Rees, Director, Community Benefit  
Middlesex Hospital  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
Thursday, February 11, 2016**

**HB 5044, An Act Making Adjustments To State Expenditures For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017**

Good afternoon, members of the Appropriations Committee. Middlesex Hospital appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony concerning **HB 5044, An Act Making Adjustments To State Expenditures For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017**.

Connecticut's not-for-profit hospitals are some of its most important assets – we are anchor institutions in our communities, oftentimes our cities' largest employers. But to those of us who work in CT hospitals, our fundamental purpose is to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities by providing high quality healthcare and outreach services to those we serve.

The constant barrage of cuts from the State – totaling more than \$2 billion since Governor Malloy took office - undermines this purpose. In response, we have had to discontinue key programs and halt the hiring of staff. As we find ourselves again addressing this issue, we must continue to ask the question: why are CT's not-for-profit hospitals, which provide essential and critical services to maintain a community's wellbeing, the constant target for balancing the State's budget? The short- and long- term affects threaten the health stability of our communities. It is critical to understand that these unsustainable hospital cuts have a direct impact on those who live in the communities we serve and the communities **you** serve.

This bill proposes more than \$90 million in cuts from vital healthcare services for hospitals and mental health programs. This is in addition to millions of dollars of reductions that hospitals have already experienced. You may wonder who bears the brunt of this? Ultimately, it is our most vulnerable and at-risk community members; those who struggle with mental health issues, substance abuse, complex medical conditions, frailty, homelessness and housing

insufficiency, food insecurity, loneliness, hopelessness. We invite legislators to come to our hospitals to meet our patients who have been impacted and will continue to be impacted by these continuous State budget cuts. Or to attend our Community Care Team meetings where we collaborate with community partners to develop sustainable wrap-around care plans that also address the psychosocial needs and social determinants of health for those who struggle with mental health and addiction issues.

We ask that the financial threats to our viability by the State cease.

We ask that you allow us to continue our work in prevention and in helping our community's most vulnerable achieve stability (thereby reducing the expenditure of State healthcare dollars).

We ask that you stop the degradation of a core pillar that supports a community: health.

And finally, we ask that you vote "no" on the hospital and healthcare cuts contained in HB 5044.

We thank you for your consideration and attention to this important matter.

Of note:

Middlesex Hospital serves 14,000+ inpatient visits, 80,000+ Emergency Department visits, and 520,000+ outpatient visits per year. We employ over 2,500 people, including 200 on medical staff. In addition to providing an economic impact to our local and State economies, we invest over \$53 million in community benefit (FY14) for improving the health of our community. Since inception of State hospital taxation in FY12, Middlesex Hospital has paid over \$60 million in taxes.