



GUARDIAN

AD LITEM SERVICES, INC.

Melissa's Project • Conservative Care

Testimony by Michael Mackniak, Chief Operating Officer, Guardian Ad Litem Services, Inc.

HB 6887, An Act Expanding Coverage for Mental Health Care Services and Substance Abuse Services

Good morning, Senator Kelly, Senator Larson, Representative Scanlon and distinguished members of the Insurance Committee.

My name is Attorney Michael Mackniak. I am the Chief Operating Officer and co-founder of Guardian Ad Litem Services. I am here to testify in favor of HB 6887, An Act Expanding Coverage for Mental Health Care Services and Substance Abuse Services

Guardian Ad item Services is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization. We were developed as a collaborative effort between The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Probate Court Administration. Our mission is to strengthen communication among community providers and to orchestrate care coordination efforts to benefit people living with severe and persistent mental illnesses across Connecticut.

I am here to speak in favor of furthering Insurance coverage for, not only, increased case management services, but, also, Care Coordination services which are two very distinct concepts. Care Coordination is giving meaning and substance to comprehensive planning and collaboration. It is ensuring commitment and consistency on behalf of a team of providers who strive to achieve the best results for a mutual client. It is about securing communication among those providers so all are moving in the same direction adhering to the same set of principles and expecting the same results.

Guardian's flagship program, Melissa's Project, was the first organization of its kind to take the concept of care coordination to a macro level, applying it to a statewide service agency. The program demonstrates that the typical perils of compartmentalization, "silos", misunderstanding and mistrust can be put aside when building comprehensive, well-coordinated teams functioning in an Interrelated Service System. The success of this program has profound impact, it improves client experiences, health outcomes and reduces wasteful spending.

Implementing Care Coordination for 250 individuals, Guardian demonstrates \$6 million in fiscal savings annually. Some of our quantitative outcomes include: Reduction the number of days that people are incarcerated by 70%, Decrease in private hospitalizations by nearly 40% and State hospitalization by 50%.

By expanding the definition of case management and including Care Coordination as covered services, the quality of life for hundreds, if not thousands of Connecticut residents will be greatly improved. Today, I ask that you support these results-based services for people living with mental health and/ or substance abuse disorders and all of our most at-need populations.

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Thank you for time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michael Mackniak
Chief Operating Officer