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Yale
NewHaven
Health
Smilow Cancer
Hospital

March 14, 2018

To the Connecticut State Legislative Joint Committee on Public Health

Yale CANCER
CENTER
A Comprehensive Cancer Center Designated
by the National Cancer Institute

RE: HB 5148

Dear members of the Joint Committee on Public Health

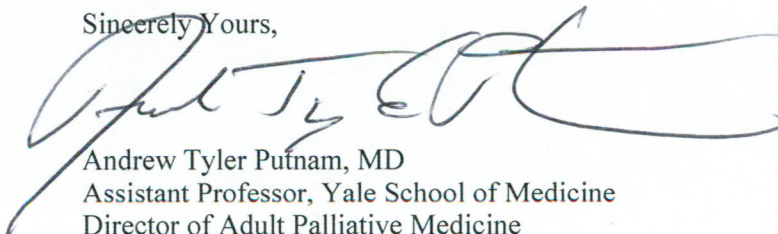
I am writing in support of HB 5148, and to ask for your support of this important bill. As the Director of Adult Palliative Medicine at Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale New Haven, I do not see many pregnant patients but in my career, I have seen several. The cause has generally been cancer that was diagnosed after the woman's pregnancy had begun. I have also seen a pregnant woman maintained on life support in Washington DC after a car accident. Sadly, pregnant women can find themselves in situations where Advanced Directives are very important.

The purpose of Advanced Directives is to allow any patient the right to determine what will happen to her medically, if she is not able to partake in discussions or if her life is in immediate danger so that life support would be necessary. I have been part of countless discussions with patients and families both to encourage them to write Advanced Directives and to help enforce a patient's Advanced Directives, when the patient was unable to verbally express an opinion. These discussions are based on the ethical principle of autonomy, allowing the patient to choose.

The fact that under current Connecticut law, a pregnant woman does not have the right held by almost every other adult to guide her own care when her life is at risk seems to me to violate a different ethical principle; Justice. Life supportive measures such as attempts at resuscitation, intubation, multiple tests involving needles and stays in the ICU that often require sedation are not comfortable, and can cause great suffering. I believe that all adults should have the right to be protected from these procedures if they desire and expressly state that in Advanced Directives. The fact that these Advanced Directives will not be honored because a woman is pregnant is not just.

I am asking for your support on HB 5148. I believe that the changes in the forms would be a good solution for both patients and physicians. I work with the model form frequently and I believe that the additional language would be clear to doctors and patients. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,



Andrew Tyler Putnam, MD
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