Good evening. My name is Pamela Clark and I am a Nurse Manager at the Brownstone Clinic affiliated with Hartford Hospital. I am here today to testify in opposition to HB 7148, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2021, And Making Appropriations Therefor. Hartford Hospital opposes any change to the terms and conditions of the current agreement in place between hospitals and the state pertaining to supplemental payments as those payments impact the care we provide to Medicaid patients.

The Brownstone Clinic has been in existence for over a hundred years treating the medically underserved and uninsured in the Hartford area. We provide adult primary care, dental care, access to specialists for chronic and infectious diseases and a unique clinical training experience for physicians and nurses. The Brownstone Clinics in total had over 40,000 patient visits last year with 85 percent of our patients receiving Medicaid coverage. The Dental Clinic alone had 20,000 patient visits in 2018.

The patients that I see at the Clinic are individuals with very complex chronic conditions, almost always with comorbidities. These patients are referred to the Clinic mostly through the emergency department at Hartford Hospital. In fact, if a Medicaid patient needs to see a specialist, the Brownstone is often the only way a patient can access the specialists they need to see. Within the Clinic we operate urology, cardiology, ophthalmology, neurology clinics that enable our patients to get the highest quality specialist care.

As I said earlier, the patients we treat at the Brownstone have complex conditions – we need to spend time with our patients, they are not a quick 15 minute check-up. We have patients struggling with psychiatric issues combined with chronic physical illnesses and are often struggling with homelessness.
One of our biggest issues with our patients is missed appointments. It is not the patient's fault as they face a myriad of socioeconomic factors, lack of adequate housing, transportation, food. They have so many challenges on a daily basis that it is an unrealistic expectation to think they will always be able to make appointments. For most of our patients at the Brownstone we provide them a certain quality of care and dignity in that care that they can rely whenever they are able to come in.

Thank for the opportunity to speak to you this evening.