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**Testimony of Shelley White In Support of HB 7166
AAC Nonemergency Medical Transportation for Medicaid Beneficiaries**

Feb. 27, 2019

I offer this testimony in strong support of HB 7166. HB 7166 would provide protections to vulnerable Medicaid recipients with respect to their right to receive transportation to and from medical providers. My name is Shelley White and I am the Litigation and Advocacy Director for New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Nonemergency medical transportation assures meaningful access to critical medical care necessary to protect the health and safety of poor and sick Connecticut residents.

There has been much media coverage of the failures of Veyo, the state-contractor for nonemergency medical transportation, to provide timely and appropriate medical transportation as required by its contract with the Department of Social Services. Before Veyo, there were even greater problems with Logisticare, which finally lost its contract due to poor service.

For years, we have read stories in the media of stranded patients, cancelled rides, and persons who use wheelchairs sent drivers in cars that cannot accommodate wheelchairs. Each of these failures represents a person who did not receive a vital medical service. It might be chemotherapy, it might be missed mental health therapy session, it might be a missed appointment to treat an addiction. But, each time a patient does not access critical medical care, they are put at risk for possible hospitalization, or worse, all at increased cost to taxpayers.

This bill would afford Medicaid beneficiaries the right to reasonable wait times for transportation (absent an unforeseen emergency) and the right to appropriate transportation that addresses their disabilities. Persons who use wheelchairs or similar medical equipment require specialized transportation that addresses their needs. It gives Medicaid beneficiaries the right to seek civil injunctive relief based on any violation as well as an order compelling the Commissioner of Social Services to seek penalties against the contractor.

These protections are vital to protecting taxpayer dollars by ensuring access to medically necessary services and vital to the beneficiaries who have suffered for too long waiting for a transportation system that can provide timely and appropriate services. We urge your support for this important legislation.