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DEPUTY SPEAKER

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PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

February 19, 2019

Testimony from Representative Michelle Cook

In Opposition of Senate Bill 66 An Act Concerning the Nonemergency Transportation of Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Confined to a Stretcher.

Chairman Leone, Lemar; Vice Chairs; Ranking Members; and the Distinguished Members of the Transportation Committee.

I am testifying in opposition of Senate Bill 66 An Act Concerning the Nonemergency Transportation of Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Confined to a Stretcher.

I understand and acknowledge the importance of transporting patients in the safest way possible, but I cannot support this bill as it potentially puts patients in a dangerous situation. The way stretcher vans are currently set up makes it impossible for van operators to provide emergency medical treatment to a patient should an emergency arise. Because drivers are unable to communicate with the patient, detect distress or provide care, the patient's health is at risk.

Additionally, operators are not required to receive training for basic medical services. As the bill currently stands, operators are only required to be "trained in the lifting, moving and transport of a person on a stretcher that is equivalent to such training provided to emergency medical services personnel, as defined in section 19a-180b of the Connecticut General Statutes." If there was an unforeseen medial emergency, the driver would be unable to provide the necessary medical treatment to save the patient's life. This is a neglectful oversight that could lead to unfortunate

outcomes, especially since Connecticut lacks regulations for safety restraints, securing, personnel training, inspecting and the certification of stretcher vans.

A qualified medical professional such as an EMR, EMT or paramedic, should accompany the patient during transport to provide lifesaving care during an unexpected medical situation, particularly if the patient is so medically compromised that they must be transported on a gurney in a vehicle containing specialized equipment.

In addition to the potential safety hazards, this bill could lead to higher state spending. Currently, Medicare only pays for non-emergency ambulance transports, and does not pay for stretcher van transports in any circumstance, so patients will incur the full cost of transport.

Medicaid/Medicare (partial dual) patients will also be responsible for the full cost of transports via stretcher as well since Medicare does not cover any other mode of transportation than ambulance when there is a medical necessity, and Medicaid does not pay for non-covered Medicare services provided to partial dual members.

Medicaid does not cover non-emergency transport by any transportation mode except ambulances. For every one of the full duals that moves from an ambulance transport to transport by stretcher van, the payment moves from the Medicare ledger to the Medicaid ledger and the state Medicaid program bears the full cost of the transport. State expenditures could increase by adding stretcher vans to the Medicaid program.

I am strongly opposed to this proposal as it will increase the risk for dangerous medical situations, increase personal patient costs for medically-necessary transportation, and increase state expenditures.

I therefore would respectfully ask the committee to vote against this proposal for the safety of Connecticut residents and betterment of our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle L. Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Michelle L. Cook
65th Assembly District