



July 18, 2016

Good Afternoon, Members of the Task force, my name is Arvind Shaw, CEO of Generations family health center and I am here to speak for the patients in the rural part of the state.

Generations provides 22,500 patients with primary care medical, dental and behavioral services in Willimantic, Putnam, Danielson and Norwich.

Population Health

The health statistics for Windham County show that the disease burden is the greatest in the state. In the last five years it has ranked dead last in the state for premature deaths and clinical care as shown in county health rankings. We have also seen the chasm get deeper and wider with the loss of primary care providers growing from 1771:1 to 1870:1 and in the rest of the state the ratio is 1170:1 – a 60% disparity. This directly parallels the hypothesis that 50% of the primary care is being delivered through the emergency room or not at all.

In Windham the supply of services is shrinking quickly with patients having to wait for services or travelling large distances to get care. Patients will continue to get sicker which impacts the delivery of population healthcare. This has a direct impact on the provider economy with the inability to qualify for the incentives and shared savings that DSS and SIM are proposing. It also increases insurance costs as well as the dependence on government subsidies needed. There will be no shared savings if costs are not managed.

Transportation

Many of the people in our community are dependent on public transportation, or walk, and are not able to obtain services that are removed from the community. They are not able to visit sick relatives transported to other regional hospitals. Physicians on the hospital staff even suggest their patients use other area hospitals where there is full ICU backup. Patients and their families may choose to struggle with transportation and delays and go a little further to a fully equipped regional community hospital, where emergencies and elective surgery can be handled more safely. These delays and hidden transportation costs need to be considered.

Patient safety

The public health axiom holds true- That the system is designed for the results that it is getting. It is very difficult to demand the same maintenance of effort when the state budget has cut healthcare funding. This has further segregated the healthcare risks, and created greater disparities for the sickest folks in the community when they need the greatest amount of care. The people of Eastern Connecticut are today at a greater health risk in a great many more ways, from many of the unintended consequences of a flawed supply of providers. We need a policy that will give us better results, and preserve the investments in health equity already made on behalf of all the residents in the state.

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