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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the Human Services Committee
March 5, 2013**

Re: H.B. 5919, AAC Presumptive Medicaid Eligibility for Home Care

Senators Slossberg and Markley, Representatives Abercrombie and Wood, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) on the above referenced bill.

Impact on CT Women

Medicaid, the state-federal health coverage program for the poor, provides low-income women with basic health and long-term care coverage. While often not considered to be a women's health program, in Connecticut women comprise 55% of adult Medicaid beneficiaries and 57% of Medicare beneficiaries.¹

Fourteen percent of Connecticut's population is aged 65 and over. Elderly women represent 58% of the Connecticut's elderly population and 68% of the elderly population over the age of 85.² Based on the *Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Connecticut* (ESSI), 60% of women over the age of 65 cannot meet basic expenses. Older women of color are particularly at risk – 75% of Hispanic and 74% of African-American women have annual incomes that do not cover basic expenses.³

Access to the Home-Care Program insures that elders and people with disabilities remain in their homes, rather than long-term care institutions. Individuals who are eligible for Medicaid would also be eligible for the Connecticut Home-Care Program; therefore providing presumptive eligibility eliminates the delays that result in someone being placed in institutional care pending paperwork completion. Passage of this bill would allow these individuals to remain independent through self-directed care in a community setting. We look forward to working with you to address this important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. *Connecticut: Health Insurance Coverage for Women Ages 18-64*, 2009.

² U.S. Census Bureau. American Fact Finder, *2010 Profiles of General Population and Housing Characteristics*.

³ The Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston, and Wider Opportunities for Women. *The Elder Security Initiative Program: The Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Connecticut*, 2009. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Connecticut Commission on Aging.