

18-20 Trinity St., Hartford, CT 06106 • 860/240-8300 • [pcsw@cga.ct.gov](mailto:pcsw@cga.ct.gov) • [www.cga.ct.gov/pcsw/](http://www.cga.ct.gov/pcsw/)

CONTACT: Christine Palm, Communications Director at 860/240-8449; or 860/836-2145

## **PCSW Holds Informational Hearing with Comptroller and Public Health Committee on Proposed Merger of Waterbury Hospitals**

**For Immediate Release TODAY – June 11, 2012**

HARTFORD – An informational hearing sponsored jointly by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), Comptroller Kevin Lembo and Public Health Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Theresa Gerratana and Rep. Betsy Ritter brought together healthcare professionals, members of the Waterbury community, business interests, advocacy groups and the Attorney General's office to discuss the proposed acquisition and merger of Waterbury Hospital and Saint Mary's Hospital by LHP, Inc.

Held at the Legislative Office Building, the forum shed light on the evolving situation, which has at its core proposed changes to women's reproductive healthcare and the economic interests of the Waterbury community. At issue is the Catholic St. Mary's Hospital's position upholding the "Ethical and Religious Directives," created by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. If the directives are strictly followed by the new entity ultimately resulting from the merger, several services widely considered part of the full range of women's reproductive healthcare would be eliminated. And while patients could still go to local pharmacies for birth control and to clinics for abortions (to name two services prohibited by the directives), there are other medical procedures, such as post-partum tubal ligations, that can only be done in a hospital, which would also be eliminated.

"For more than six months, the PCSW has been working with stakeholders such as Waterbury Hospital, the Comptroller's Office, the Office of the Healthcare Advocate and the Waterbury community; advocacy groups such as MergerWatch, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and Compassion & Choices, among others; and the Governor's Office to ensure that the complete range of reproductive healthcare continues to be available to the citizens of Waterbury," said Teresa Younger, executive director of the PCSW. "We remain firm in our belief that no single group's religious views or business interest should dictate either the standard of care – or the degree to which that care is delivered – to the community at large. We stand by Gov. Malloy as he works to balance Waterbury's economic imperatives with the preservation of comprehensive women's reproductive health services, and we urge all parties involved in this proposed merger to affirm women's rights to such care."

The following is a list of speakers at the forum. (Several of their testimonies are attached.)

- Dan Moen, CEO, LHP Hospital Group,
- Chad Wable, CEO/President, Saint Mary's Hospital
- Darlene Stromstad, CEO/President, Waterbury Hospital,
- Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary
- Assistant Attorney General Henry Salton
- Assistant Attorney General Gary Hawes
- Sheila Reynertson, Advocacy Coordinator, MergerWatch
- Theresa Connor, Director Of Government Affairs, Compassion & Choices
- Dr. Fred Hyde, Consultant
- James H. Gatling, PhD, Chairman, Waterbury Regional Chamber
- Steve Schrag, Co-Chair, Waterbury Community United
- Elizabeth Brown, Member, Waterbury Community United
- Rev. Leroy Perry, Mt. Olive Church in Waterbury
- Mary Rosengrant, Principal in Boindi and Rosengrant, LLC
- Mary Iorio, Waterbury Community Member
- Barbara Simonetta, RN, CT Nurses Association
- Steve Thornton, Vice President, District 1199-SEIU

*PCSW Executive Director Teresa Younger can be reached on her cell phone at 860/305-6583.*

*About the PCSW: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1973 under Sec. 46a-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes to study and improve Connecticut women's economic security, health and safety; to promote consideration of qualified women to leadership positions and to work toward the elimination of gender discrimination. As a non-partisan arm of the General Assembly, the agency monitors, critiques and recommends changes to legislation in order to inform public policy, and assesses programs and practices in all State agencies for their effect on the state's women. The PCSW serves as a liaison between government and its diverse constituents, and convenes stakeholders, including the business, non-profit and educational communities, local governments, and the media, in order to promote awareness of women's issues.*