



# Official Statement

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

**FROM:** Teresa C. Younger, Executive Director

**RE:** Proposed Hospital Merger, Waterbury

**DATE:** Sept. 5, 2012

“Per our mandate to work for the enhancement of women’s health and safety in Connecticut, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) has been monitoring how the creation of a proposed replacement facility in Waterbury would affect women’s reproductive healthcare in that area. After careful analysis of the plan, and despite our hopes to the contrary, the PCSW has come to the conclusion that the proposal is inadequate to meet the needs of the Waterbury women’s community.

We believe that any state-of-the-art facility being built – especially with partial support from taxpayers’ dollars – should represent the needs of all the residents of the area, should treat all citizens equitably, regardless of gender, religion or socio-economic standing, and should have a far more definitive plan for future financial sustainability. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the dictates of the *Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs)* of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will derail a much-needed facility.

Over the course of nearly a year of negotiations, PCSW, with the input from MergerWatch, a respected expert in hospital mergers, put forth several alternative ideas, all of which were dismissed based on the dictates of the ERDs. These options included a “hospital within a hospital,” a “continuation of procedure” agreement, and a “stand-alone center” (with comprehensive birthing and reproductive services). Each of them has been used successfully in other similar merger situations.

Specifically, we have two main objections to the plan as it stands:

1. The facility fails to serve those who need it most. As envisioned, the Women’s Pavilion put forth excludes all women outside the very narrow population of those who have scheduled, low-risk Cesarean Sections and wish to have a tubal ligation post-partum. It’s well known that *all* deliveries carry inherent risk and that babies do not necessarily arrive on schedule or according to plan; therefore, even women in the select category may find themselves, or their baby, in distress due to unforeseen factors. Furthermore, this facility does not offer services to those women who have been determined to be high-risk from the outset. For both populations, the emergency care plan involving transport of patients in distress raises serious concerns. In addition, the fact that the proposed nursery is designed to serve only healthy babies means that many families will find themselves excluded from the population served and that even healthy women may find themselves suddenly separated from a baby born with less than optimal health.

2. The facility is not financially sustainable. After review by the respected financial analysts at MergerWatch, we consider the Women's Pavilion not financially sustainable because it operates on too many assumptions involving net revenues and relies on too many unknown factors, including Medicaid reimbursement rates, the actual volume of the anticipated patient population, and unspecified grants.

We are well aware of the considerable thought Waterbury Hospital has put into reconfiguring the proposal, and we are grateful for their willingness to let us be a partner in trying to preserve critical women's reproductive healthcare services that will be eliminated under the ERDs. PCSW looks forward to a continuing conversation with the interested parties in the hopes of resolving these key issues.

*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.*