



**Testimony of Victoria Veltri, Acting State Healthcare Advocate
Before the Public Health Committee
In Support of H.B. 6372
February 23, 2011**

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Ritter, Senator Welch, Representative Perillo and members of the Public Health Committee. For the record, I am Victoria Veltri, the Acting State Healthcare Advocate. My office, the Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA) is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans; and, informing you of problems consumers face in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

I am happy to testify today in support of H.B. 6372, An Act Concerning Patient Access to Records Maintained by Health Care Institutions. This bill would provide a positive change to the process by which patients can access their healthcare information, and I ask for your consideration of this important piece of legislation.

H.B. 6372 would require healthcare institutions to allow patients to view their healthcare records, either by providing patients with a copy of these records or by allowing patients to examine these records onsite. Additionally, this bill would allow patients to access any of their stored tissue or pathology slides that they wish to obtain. Viewing healthcare records is a right that is vitally important to patients and may at times be necessary to a patient's health and well being. For these reasons OHA believes that patients should be able to access their healthcare information through a simple, straightforward process.

Another important feature of this legislation is that it provides a mechanism through which to investigate institutions that obstruct patients' access to their health-related information. H.B. 6372 lays out a process by which a patient who is denied access to his or her medical records may file a written complaint with the Department of Public Health, triggering a public hearing conducted by the Commissioner of Public Health. This process would provide an accountable, transparent way to ensure that health care providers comply with the requirements set forth in H.B. 6372; OHA strongly supports this provision as a means to protect patients' rights.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of H.B. 6372. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have at this time.

