



Testimony before the

Council of the District of Columbia

Committee on Health

on

B17-186: Dialysis Patient Care Amendment Act of 2007

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Presented by

Robert A. Malson

President

November 6, 2008

Chairman Catania and members of the Committee on Health, I am Robert A. Malson, President of the District of Columbia Hospital Association (DCHA). DCHA members employ approximately 30,000 people who are on the front lines for delivering quality health care and for responding to any medical emergency in the District of Columbia. We provide over 1 million days of patient care annually with an annualized occupancy rate of approximately 75 percent. In our private hospitals, the emergency room visits exceed 389,000 and, collectively, we provide nearly \$200,000,000 in unsponsored care annually. Clearly, we play a critical role in the District's health care delivery system.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present testimony on B17-186: Dialysis Patient Care Amendment Act of 2007. DCHA would like to offer its broad support for this bill, as its provisions will bring much needed standards for dialysis technicians. However, we would like to ensure that all Councilmembers are aware of the broad reach of the legislation. Nephrology comes under the purview not only of internal medicine, but is also is a subspecialty of pediatrics. Therefore, we must take into consideration the unique impact this bill may have on the special care given to children. Pediatric nephrologists care for children from infancy through late adolescence with kidney or urinary tract diseases, bladder problems, high blood pressure or who are on dialysis. They are specially trained to evaluate and treat problems with growth and development that are specifically related to chronic kidney disease. Yet, the field is not acknowledged in this bill.

It is for this reason that DCHA requests the definition of "nephrology" on Page 2, line 4 of the bill be changed to read "the discipline of internal medicine **and pediatrics**

that deals with the study and functions of the kidneys, kidney diseases, renal care and dialysis.”

Mr. Chairman, we would be supportive of the Dialysis Patient Care Amendment Act with the revision proposed and are eager to work with the District to develop ways to implement these recommendations. We welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.