

July 17, 2015

The Honorable Nancy Wyman  
State Capitol  
Hartford, Connecticut  
[LtGovernor.Wyman@ct.gov](mailto:LtGovernor.Wyman@ct.gov)

Re: An Act Concerning Hospitals, Insurers and Health Care Consumers (PA 15-146, SB-811)

Dear Lt. Governor Wyman,

We are writing as independent consumer advocates to thank our state's leadership for passage of important health care reform legislation this session, and to offer our enthusiastic support to implement it. An Act Concerning Hospitals, Insurers and Health Care Consumers (PA 15-146) will provide both short and long-term relief to our state's health system and build value with common sense industry regulation, important consumer protections, a health information exchange, and transparency in both the prices and quality of health care. We want to thank Connecticut's legislative and executive leaders for passing this important legislation which addresses current problems in our state's health care system, while building a solid foundation for the future.

We are particularly enthusiastic about Section 17 of the Act, which directs the existing Governor's Health Care Cabinet to study successful health reforms in other states and make recommendations for policy changes that will provide a framework to control health care costs, reward value-based care and improve health outcomes for Connecticut residents.<sup>1</sup>

As veterans of past and current Connecticut health reform efforts, we offer our support as the Cabinet approaches this important task. We also offer our counsel to avoid past mistakes in health system reform efforts and to ensure the recommendations are widely supported and successful.

- **Transparency** – As it has always done, it is critical that all the Cabinet's work is conducted in public meetings, in public buildings, and that all documents are disclosed to the public.
- **Public input** – To ensure the best policy proposals, the Cabinet must engage the wisdom of all stakeholders, both by inviting public comment and, where appropriate, by creating formal or informal workgroups to harness that wisdom in fleshing out specific proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> The legislature was aware of the SIM initiative, having made two references to it in Bill 811. But, in this section, it indicated that it intends study of a different set of initiatives.

- **Ethics** – To ensure the integrity of the recommendations, it is essential that conflicted self-interests not drive the process and that we avoid even the appearance of such.
- **Build on what works** – The Cabinet is fortunate to have examples of strong programs in our state, such as our Medicaid program, including the successful non-risk Patient-Centered Medical Home program, which has earned national recognition in the last three years for significantly improving the quality of care and attracting more providers to the program while substantially controlling costs.
- **Unique character** – As the Cabinet deliberates, it is important to recognize the diversity of populations and coverage groups across our state, particularly within government coverage programs. Aligned policies will not address all Connecticut residents' health needs. We serve our residents well by variably applying initiatives based on their varying needs.

Thank you again for your leadership. Independent consumer advocates are excited about the potential for the Cabinet's study and are eager to support it and participate in the process, through public comment and participation in any workgroups which the Cabinet may deem appropriate.

Sincerely,

Shirley Girouard  
SIM Practice Transformation Committee member

Kate Mattias  
NAMI -- Connecticut

Gaye Hyre  
Patient representative, SIM Equity and Access Council

Eileen M. Healy  
Independence Northwest, Inc.

Luis Perez  
Mental Health Connecticut

Ellen Andrews  
Connecticut Health Policy Project

Jan VanTassel

Mary Boudreau  
Connecticut Oral Health Initiative

Julie Peters  
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Sheldon Toubman  
New Haven Legal Assistance Association

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Jamey Bell  
Greater Hartford Legal Aid

Kathy Flaherty  
Connecticut Legal Rights Project

Kevin Galvin  
Small Business for a Healthy CT

Kristie Barber  
Region II Regional Mental Health Board

cc:  
Senator Martin Looney  
Senator Leonard Fasano  
Senator Bob Duff  
Rep. Brendan Sharkey  
Rep. Joseph Aresimowicz  
Sen. Terry Gerratana  
Rep. Matthew Ritter  
Senator Beth Bye  
Rep. Toni Walker  
Members, Governor's Health Care Cabinet