

WINDHAM COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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Statement in Support of

Senate Bill 203 - An Act Concerning Full Payment to Medical Assistance Providers for Services Provided to Dually Eligible Patients

Human Services Committee

February 6, 2007

As this Committee is well aware, in 1999, the Connecticut General Assembly cut Medicaid funding. While the cut has meant a small savings for the State, its other result is the decreased access to care by some of Connecticut's most needy patients. Therefore, the members of the Windham County Medical Association strongly urge this committee to support Senate Bill 203.

The result of the cut in funding for the dually eligible is already becoming clear. Many patients are losing access to the services and providers that they need the most. Physicians, who are unable to absorb any more cuts, are forced to turn away new dually eligible patients. Access to care for nursing home patients, renal dialysis patients, mentally and emotionally handicapped patients, and the poor and the elderly hangs in the balance.

Over the past ten years, while hospitals and nursing homes were being given Medicaid rate increases, physicians continued to treat dually eligible patients despite never receiving a rate increase for their services. Physicians have done this in the interest of providing quality health care to Connecticut's sickest patients. However, with

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the recent cuts, physicians will no longer be able to do this. Changes to the health care industry over the past decade have forced physicians to change the way they practice medicine. HMO regulations, a medical malpractice insurance crisis, and low reimbursement rates for Medicare and Medicaid patients are forcing physicians to limit the types of patients that they treat or stop practicing medicine all together. These are not decisions that we enjoy making, however they are a reality.

We are not here today asking you to give us a rate increase, but to simply restore the funding so that physicians may receive full payment for the treatment of dually eligible patients. This will help Connecticut's physicians to continue providing medical care to Connecticut's neediest patients.

**For more information, please call:
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