



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
March 26, 2007

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Senate Bill 1448 - An Act Extending the State Physician Profile and Related Malpractice Reporting Requirements to Certain Other Health Care Providers.

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to Senate Bill 1448.

Senate Bill 1448 would require the Department to extend its physician profile program to include information pertaining to other health care practitioners who are required to maintain medical malpractice liability insurance, including dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, natureopaths, psychologists, dental hygienists, physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses.

The current physician profile provides information detailing each Connecticut licensed physician's educational and professional background, as well as disciplinary and malpractice history. Physician profiles were designed to provide Connecticut's healthcare consumers with information to assist them in making informed decisions regarding healthcare providers. The public is advised that such information should be used as a starting point in evaluating a physician and that the profile should not be the sole basis for selecting a physician.

The proposed bill modifies the existing physician profile statute to require these additional health care providers to submit information, including but not limited to, hospital disciplinary actions, criminal convictions, and malpractice judgments and awards. The proposal does not however authorize the Department, or the appropriate board or commission, to take disciplinary action against providers who do not comply with the reporting requirements.

Senate Bill 1448 would require the Department to implement the expansion of health care provider profiles effective October 1, 2007. Implementation of this initiative would result in significant fiscal impact to the Department. Additional funding would be necessary to upgrade our information technology infrastructure and to carry out the activities associated with implementing a program of this magnitude, as these functions could not be absorbed within existing resources.

The Governor's proposed budget for 2008/2009 includes the funding that is necessary to update the Department's licensing system to allow for on-line license renewal. The funding provided to the Department in the Governor's proposed budget would allow for implementation of the on-line system for physicians/surgeons and nurses on or before June 30, 2009. This appropriation would not however provide sufficient funding to fully implement an expanded provider profile program. Expanding the on-line licensing initiative to incorporate the health care provider profiles would potentially delay the implementation date for on-line license renewals.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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