Connecticut State Medical Society
FOUNDED IN 1792

160 St. Ronan Street, New Haven, CT 06511-2390 (203) 865-0587 FAX (203) 865-4997

Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony on Various Proposed Legislation presented to the Public Health Committee
February 26, 2007

Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the over 7,000 member of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you on proposed legislation before you today. Several bills before you during this hearing will have an impact on physicians and the delivery of healthcare in this state. For this reason, we offer the following comment on various bills on your agenda.

House Bill 6109 An Act Reducing Licensure Renewal Fees for Retired Dentists- CSMS respectfully asks that this legislation be amended to included retired physicians. Connecticut has the dubious distinction of having one of the highest licensure fees in the country at $450. We also know the Connecticut has a large population of retired physicians, many of whom contact us on a regular basis about the possibility of providing volunteer or pro bono services to Connecticut's underserved populations. However, we are continually told by these physicians that the cost of a $450 license to provide free services is prohibitive.

House Bill 5512 An Act establishing a Bulk Purchasing Influenza Vaccine Pilot Program- CSMS strongly supports this legislation. Each year it becomes harder and harder for physicians to obtain required doses of the influenza vaccine as large clinics and retailers, driven by profit, gobble up already limited quantities of the vaccine with enormous orders. In many cases, physicians are unable to provide the vaccine to patients with the highest risk simply because they are unable to obtain the vaccine. Often, these patients are forced pay for the vaccination that would otherwise be provided at no cost through their insurer or, what is worse will not receive the vaccination at all.

Due to the prevalence of the problem, several County Medical Societies have taken on the task of surveying their members to identify the severity. Attached to this testimony is survey summary information from the Fairfield, Hartford, and New Haven County medical societies that demonstrates that there is a significant problem. You will notice in all three counties, the small percentage of physicians who received their vaccines for this year's flu season within the most advantageous time frame.

House Bill 258 An Act Prohibiting the Use of Trans Fat in Connecticut Food Service Establishments- Promoting healthy lifestyles is one of the most cost effective ways to reduce healthcare costs. In general, physicians in this state and throughout the country support the elimination of Trans fats in the foods we prepare and consume. While we understand the impact an abrupt and complete immediate prohibition can have on many business and industries in Connecticut efforts should be undertaken to educate our citizens about the dangers of trans fat and to remove trans fats from food.

Senate Bill 89 An Act Establishing a State-wide System of Primary Care Health Clinics- Throughout the entire discussion this session on providing universal access to health care services for all Connecticut residents, CSMS has remained consistent in our position that prevention must be the foundation of any system. We are encouraged by proposals such as Senate Bill 89 that recognizes the importance of primary care. However, we must caution that it is imperative that the physician community be included in the development of a primary care system and the establishment of any primary care clinic. Primary care clinics cannot stand alone and must be tied into a continuum to care for all of the patients need. As we have seen in certain "retail" model clinics that provide solely what could be considered primary care services, patients are not served well by a health care setting that acts as a silo unto its own will no access to the entire health care system.

House Bill 6332 An Act Increasing Access to Health Care- CSMS respectfully requests the committee to take no action on this bill. While efforts to increase health insurance coverage are laudable, the legislation before you would allow health insurers to make available health plans that do not provide coverage for services this committee and the General Assembly deemed necessary to require through state statute. These requirements were put in place to promote prevention and the provision of medically necessary care. Please oppose House Bill 6332.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today.

HARTFORD COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
SUMMARY: FLU VACCINE SURVEY 2006

In December 2006, the Hartford County Medical Association mailed to 954 physicians in New Haven County whose specialties were in Primary Care, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Pediatrics, Cardiology, Pulmonology and Hematology/Oncology.

The Association received 127 responses (13%) representing a total of 437 physicians.

1. When did you place your first vaccine order for the 2006 flu season?

Fall 2005	-	39	9%
Winter 2005	-	197	45%
Spring 2006	-	134	31%
Summer 2006	-	20	5%
Winter 2006	-	41	9%
Unanswered	-	6	1%

2. How many total doses of flu vaccine have you received?

None	-	0	0%
Less than 100 doses	-	52	12%
101 to 250 doses	-	51	12%
251 to 500 doses	-	70	16%
Over 500 doses	-	261	60%
Unanswered	-	3	1%

3. As of October 30, 2006, what percentage of your initial order for flu vaccine have you received?

None	-	57	13%
Less than 25%	-	79	18%
26 – 50%	-	68	16%
51 – 75%	-	101	23%
76 – 100%	-	126	29%
Unanswered	-	6	1%

As of November 30, 2006:

0%	-	3	1%
25%	-	3	1%
26 - 50%	-	27	6%
51 - 75%	-	32	7%
76 – 100%	-	23	5%
100%	-	178	41%
Unanswered	-	171	39%

4. When did you receive your first shipment of flu vaccine?

Still waiting	-	0	
September 2006	-	112	26%
October 2006	-	231	53%
November 2006	-	78	18%
December 2006	-	3	1%
Unanswered	-	13	3%

5. From whom did you order your flu vaccine?

Manufacturer	-	173	40%
Distributor	-	228	52%
Both	-	22	5%
Unanswered	-	2	0%
State VFC Program	-	8	2%
Women's Health	-	4	1%

Name of company(s): Aventis, Anda, Besse Medical, Caligor, Darby, Henry Schein Medical, McKesson, Moore Medical, Sanofi Pasteur, CP Alternatives, Atlantic Health Care, GIV, Vaxserve and General Injectables & Vaccines, Inc.

6. Did you go to alternate sources for the flu vaccine?

Yes	-	72	16%
No	-	351	80%
Unanswered	-	14	3%

If "yes", where?

Responses indicated VNAs, Hospitals, State of Connecticut, original orders, other distributors and Health Departments.

7. If you had a problem obtaining the flu vaccine this year, where did you send your patients?

Hospital	-	12	3%
Health Department	-	37	8%
Pharmacy	-	71	16%
Retail Store Clinic	-	96	22%
Unanswered	-	197	45%
Other	-	111	25%

8. Are you responding for yourself only or your medical group?

Self Only	-	57	13%
Medical Group	-	380	87%

NEW HAVEN COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
SUMMARY: FLU VACCINE SURVEY 2006

In December 2006, the New Haven County Medical Association mailed to 584 physicians in New Haven County whose specialties were in Primary Care, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Pediatrics, Cardiology, Pulmonology and Hematology/Oncology.

The Association received 85 responses (15%) representing a total of 318 physicians.

1. When did you place your first vaccine order for the 2006 flu season?

Fall 2005	-	15	5%
Winter 2005	-	109	34%
Spring 2006	-	148	47%
Summer 2006	-	17	5%
Winter 2006	-	29	9%

2. How many total doses of flu vaccine have you received?

None	-	0	0%
Less than 100 doses	-	47	15%
101 to 250 doses	-	80	25%
251 to 500 doses	-	59	19%
Over 500 doses	-	132	42%

3. As of October 30, 2006, what percentage of your initial order for flu vaccine have you received?

None	-	29	9%
Less than 25%	-	119	37%
26 – 50%	-	84	26%
51 – 75%	-	12	4%
75 – 100%	-	69	22%
Unanswered	-	5	2%

As of November 30, 2006:

25 – 30%	-	16	5%
50%	-	26	8%
75%	-	20	6%
90 – 100%	-	122	38%
Unanswered	-	133	42%
Cancelled Order	-	1	

4. When did you receive your first shipment of flu vaccine?

Still waiting	-	0	
September 2006	-	85	27%
October 2006	-	181	57%
November 2006	-	51	16%
Cancelled Order	-	1	

5. From whom did you order your flu vaccine?

Manufacturer	-	120	38%
Distributor	-	158	50%

Name of company(s): Aventis, Anda, Besse Medical, Caligor, Darby, FFF Distributor, Flumist, GIV, Henry Schein Medical, McKesson, Moore Medical, Physician Sales & Services, Sanofi Pasteur, Seacoast Medical, Statco, Inc. and Vaxserve. 1 group order from Health Department and we had 1 no response.

6. Did you go to alternate sources for the flu vaccine?

Yes	-	105	33%
No	-	193	61%
Unanswered	-	20	6%

If "yes", where?

Responses indicated VNAs, State of Connecticut, original orders, other distributors and Health Departments.

7. If you had a problem obtaining the flu vaccine this year, where did you send your patients?

Hospital	-	7	2%
Health Department	-	44	14%
Pharmacy	-	56	18%
Retail Store Clinic	-	89	28%
Unanswered	-	181	57%

8. Are you responding for yourself only or your medical group?

Self Only	-	29	9%
Medical Group	-	289	91%

FAIRFIELD COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

SUMMARY: FLU VACCINE SURVEY 2005

On November 14, 2005 the Fairfield County Medical Association emailed and faxed 669 physicians in Fairfield County whose specialties were either family practice or internal medicine and indicated they practiced primary care medicine.

1. As of November 16, 2005, 86 flu survey forms had been returned to the Association representing the responses of 279 physicians who indicated they normally provided flu vaccine to their patients. This is a response rate of 41.7 percent of the total number of physicians polled.

2. When did you place your first vaccine order for the 2005 flu season?

Fall '04	–	4.7%
Spring '05	–	69.4%
June '05	–	11.7%
July '05	–	1.1%
August '05	–	5.9%
September '05	–	3.5%
October '05	–	3.5%
November '05	–	0%
	Total:	99.8%

3. How many total doses of flu vaccine have you received?

None	–	9.6%
Less than 100 doses	–	39.7%
101 to 200 doses	–	15.6%
201 to 300 doses	–	12.0%
301 to 400 doses	–	3.6%
401 to 500 doses	–	2.4%
Over 500 doses	–	16.8%
	Total:	99.7%

4. As of November 14, 2005, what percentage of your initial order for flu vaccine have you received?

Less than 25%	–	48.7%
26 – 50%	–	13.4%
51 – 75%	–	9.7%
76 – 100%	–	26.8%
	Total:	98.6%

5. When did you receive your first shipment of flu vaccine for 2005?

Never	–	19.5%
August '05	–	1.2%
September '05	–	23.1%
October '05	–	35.3%
November '05	–	20.7%
	Total:	99.8%

6. From whom did you order your flu vaccine?

Manufacturer	–	23.4%
Distributor	–	70.3%
Both	–	6.1%
	Total:	99.8%

7. Did you go to alternate sources for the flu vaccine?

Yes	–	45.5%
No	–	54.4%
	Total:	99.9%

8. The tabulation of the survey through November 16, 2005 represents the response of 279 doctors which is 41.7 percent of the total number of physicians in the Fairfield County Medical Association who practice primary care medicine and normally provide flu vaccine to their patients.

9. If you had a problem obtaining the flu vaccine this year, where did you send your patience?

Hospital	–	23.3%
Health Department	–	55.5%
Pharmacy	–	18.3%
Private Clinics	–	30.0%
American Lung Association	–	3.3%

The total is greater than 100 percent because some physicians checked multiple boxes.