

**House Bill 6693: An Act Concerning Creation of a State Health Care Plan**  
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Co-Chairs Hadley, Sayers, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and Committee Members

Thank you for this opportunity to address you. I am a Physician Assistant, certified in CT with over twenty years experience working in underserved areas primarily in the intercity. As an emergency room employee of a hospital, I witnessed first hand the crisis in health care in CT with demands on hospitals to care for ever-increasing numbers of uninsured or under-insured residents while re-imburements from State and Federal Programs and from many private insurances have not kept pace.

From the late 90s continuing until I left work in 2002, every wage increase was eaten up by larger increases in the cost of health insurance, as workers' out-of-pocket health care expenses increased. As an observer of the health care system, I recognize that things are getting worse; health care institutions are less stable and more people are lacking needed medical care. Last week, the Courant and Washington Post both reported an .8% monthly increase in the cost of medical care, the greatest in over 15 years, reflecting higher costs for prescription drugs and doctor services, which were rising in January at the fastest clip in 25 years. Predictions are for annual increases of 7% yearly which is clearly unsustainable.

**The time is over for stop-gap measures.** We need legislators who will make bold, systemic changes which will address the real problems that we face. House Bill 6693 would provide universal health care coverage, it would stabilize reimbursement rates to hospitals and providers, providing greater access to care and ultimately decreased costs for insurance to consumers and, most importantly, to businesses. The state must take control of costs by setting a budget, defining covered benefits, and reimbursement levels. It can make our troubled system work by purchasing in bulk, and eliminating redundant paperwork. **H.B. 6693** could establish standards for quality of care that are the same for everyone.

Schoen, Davis and others in their 2006 article in the journal *Health Affairs*, [US Health System Performance: A National Scorecard](#) note that 1/3 of adults and over half of all children did not have a primary care doctor or "medical home". The paper presents findings and a scorecard assessing of U.S. health system performance both with national and international comparisons. Average U.S. scores across domains of health outcomes, access, quality, equity and efficiency underscore the reasons why we are here today. The authors say, "the single most important determinant of whether patients obtain essential health care is having health insurance." They go on to say that 62 million adults are either uninsured or under-insured. They highlight two indicators for **universal participation: adequate insurance and receipt of needed care** and note that both are inseparable from **affordability**. HB 6693 will address these critical issues.

A final word to the panel: it is time to take control—support HB 6693 and take the bull by horns: **create a workable system for Connecticut** and force all players; providers, hospitals, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies and CBIA to participate and compromise toward the goal of a sustainable quality health care plan for CT which is universal and accessible to all. The needs of CT citizens and small businesses must come first.