



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE January 31, 2007

Richard Edmonds, Public Health Initiatives 509-7655

House Bill 6976 - An Act Concerning Chronic Care Management

The Department of Public Health supports House Bill 6976.

This bill proposes legislation that mirrors strategies already identified by the Department of Public Health's chronic disease programs to address chronic diseases in Connecticut. The Department believes that a solid chronic care management policy can transform the healthcare system from being essentially reactive (responding mainly when sickness manifests) to becoming a proactive system that aims at keeping individuals as healthy as possible.

The Department of Public Health has ongoing statewide plans for specific chronic conditions such as Asthma, Diabetes, Tobacco Addiction, Cancer, Sickle Cell, Obesity and Stroke. Through these efforts the Department has gained extensive experience building consensus among the health care and health prevention communities by bringing together both expert organizations and utilizing its own expertise in planning, chronic care and prevention programs.

Health outcomes can be improved and health care costs saved by managing chronic conditions more effectively. A common example is the prevention of uncontrolled high blood pressure. An individual with this condition is two to four times more likely to develop coronary heart disease subsequently leading to heart attack and stroke. In a related example, a 10% reduction in total blood cholesterol resulting from increased awareness may diminish the incidence of heart disease by 30%. Strict management of diabetes has the potential to prevent up to 85% of lower extremity amputations, for which 2002 Connecticut hospital discharge data showed a total cost of \$38,827,757. Diabetes self-management education is essential because improperly controlled diabetes can result in cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, blindness and loss of limb. Thus, the Department's Diabetes Advisory Council focuses on effective community programs, a responsive healthcare system, and educating and engaging patients.

This bill requires a coordinated, multi-agency effort. The scope of this initiative calls for a technically sound, well-funded and dedicated task force. The Department of Public Health is fully prepared to chair the Advisory Committee and to lead the strategic planning initiative as proposed by this bill.

The Department of Public Health welcomes the opportunity to partner with other state agencies, as the challenges to build an infrastructure for exchanging health information are many. One is how to reconcile the contrary goals of sharing health information and protecting patient privacy. Therefore, a principal goal of such system must be security and confidentiality of patient information.

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

Phone:



Telephone Device for the Deaf: (860) 509-7191

410 Capitol Avenue - MS # _____

P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134

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