

# The Fairfield County Medical Association

*Physicians Dedicated to a Healthier Fairfield County*

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## Memorandum of Support

### PHYSICIAN IDENTITY THEFT

The disclosure of Social Security (SSN) and Employer Identification (EIN) numbers in private and government transactions increases the potential for identity theft. Therefore, any opportunity to limit their use and substitute other identifiers should be given high priority.

Physicians are at great risk for identity theft because as it currently stands most, if not all, health insurers require the inclusion of a physician's SSN or EIN in box 25 on the universally accepted CMS-1500 claim form. Since all physicians are in the process of obtaining a federally mandated National Provider Identifier (NPI) number and all insurers will be required to accept the NPI numbers by no later than May 23, 2007, the need for the physician's SSN or EIN on claim forms will no longer be necessary.

**In fact, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has determined it will no longer require the SSN on Medicare claims, effective April 1, 2007 (see attached).**

The state can help further protect physicians from identity theft by prohibiting commercial insurers from requiring an SSN or EIN in box 25 of the CMS-1500, as they too will be able to cross-reference all claims paid to a particular NPI number with an associated SSN or EIN for purposes of generating the IRS-1099 form. Although SB 256, An Act Eliminating the Disclosure of Physicians' Social Security Numbers on Health Insurance Claim Forms, did not receive a public hearing due to technical reasons, it contained the language necessary to mitigate physicians' vulnerability to identity theft.

At this juncture, it is hoped that the language in SB 256 will be amended to another bill that will go the (Senate) floor for a vote. When that happens, we hope we can count on your support to pass the language, which will further protect physicians from the very real threat of identity theft vis-à-vis the ubiquitous health insurance claim form.

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