

CONNECTICUT CENTER
FOR PATIENT SAFETY
QUALITY HEALTHCARE IS A RIGHT.

Senate Bill 1 Senate Bill 88
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Healthcare is a public commodity, like education. Providing it is essential for the health of CT's economy and future.

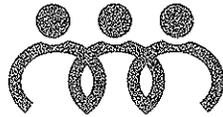
I believe that Connecticut, with its good minds and committed legislators can solve this problem. CT can invent new policy initiatives. But we have to keep people at the table and have honest discussions without special interests fleeing the room.

We all talk about the 30% waste in the health care dollar. But what we do not talk about is the profits of the pharmaceuticals, insurance companies, physicians, hospitals and HMOS. Some of these profits are exorbitant and they are at the expense of providing healthcare for CT residents. How do we talk about cost containment without scaring off special interests?

And while individual responsibility needs to be integrated into our healthcare plan, you and I, as healthcare consumers, cannot be held accountable for pharmaceutical advertising, medical errors, a reimbursement system that underwrites disease treatment and fails to foster prevention.

One way to immediately address some of the unnecessary costs is to aggressively deal with the cost of medical error. One statistic alone exposes the costs and the power of prevention strategies. There are 21 to 42 thousand CT residents who go into our hospitals each year and get an infection. These infections add an immediate \$50,000 to each one of those hospital bills. (Pennsylvania Cost Containment Council 2006 report). When hospitals focus, they can decrease these infections by 85%. CT Hospitals are beginning to work on the problem, but it is a slow process and it was not until you, the CT Legislators, passed our Hospital acquired Infection bill last year that action was taken.

Electronic records are an upfront expense but will help decrease error. Think about that physician handwriting and the numbers of prescriptions filled incorrectly. Think about the numbers of drugs now available and the similarity of their names. How many of us in the room have discovered that one drug is incompatible with another? Recently a



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pregnant friend of mine found that the decimal point on her prescription was in the wrong place. But she had had to do the research on her own on the internet. E-prescribing will help as will creating an electronic health record for each of us. There are privacy risks and I have attached to my testimony today the consumer principles we need to establish as we move forward with health information technology.

We can do this. CT legislators can have the hard discussions and conversations that will move us forward. But basic rules need to be established. The healthcare industry has been operating for too long under the radar.

Consumer Principles as applied to Health Information Technology

- **Individuals should be able to access their personally identifiable health information conveniently and affordably.**
- **Individuals should know how their personally identifiable health information may be used and who has access to it.**
- **Individuals should have control over whether and how their personally identifiable health information is shared.**
- **Systems for electronic health data exchange must protect the integrity, security, privacy and confidentiality of an individual's information.**
- **The governance and administration of electronic health information networks should be transparent and publicly accountable.**