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January 29, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a primary care physician writing to you in support of Senate Bill 673 sponsored by the honorable Senator Handley. This bill mandates insurance coverage for the testing of bone marrow donors. Similar bills have already passed in NH, RI, ME, and MA.

Bone marrow transplants are required by individuals who have life threatening diseases such as Leukemia. Most of these individuals are afflicted in the prime of their lives when they are contributing the most to their families, communities, and jobs. These transplants can be life saving.

The current cost of approximately \$65.00, which must be paid to become a bone marrow donor, is likely to deter many people from volunteering to become donors. Experience in other states that have passed similar legislation shows that the quality of the donor and retention improved.

The concern that such legislation would increase the number of future mandates was not realized.

Becoming a bone marrow donor is a unique medical procedure, which is performed only once. This information is registered for future use. It is unlike other medical procedures like mammograms which incur incremental costs because they are done annually.

The benefits of this bill will far outweigh the costs. Bone marrow transplants are life saving. They return patients to their normal lives as contributors to their families, society, and the Connecticut economy.

I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 673.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Petronio, MD

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