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*TESTIMONY OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 26, 2008*

I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 5618, An Act Concerning Revisions to the Husky Plan.

This proposal will ensure continuity of services for participants in the Husky program by requiring that any child eligible for Husky benefits remains eligible for a 12 month period. Further, the Department of Social Services (DSS) would be prohibited from contracting with a managed care plan for the Husky program until July 1, 2009. In the meantime, the department would study the efficacy of a fee for service system -- which has currently been in place for several months -- or a primary care case management system, which has been used successfully in other states for specific populations.

The Husky program is in a state of transition. Two managed care organizations dropped the program, requiring the state to bring the program in-house. Contracts for administration of the program on an administrative services organization basis have been awarded to four managed care organizations and Husky participants are temporarily enrolled with them until April 1, 2008. HUSKY participants have been notified by DSS that, by April 1, 2008, they must choose between the two remaining managed care organizations or DSS administration. DSS has expressed its intent to award a new contract to insurers effective July 1, 2008 in conjunction with the Charter Oak Health Plan, leading to further disruption of providers less than three months after Husky participants have signed up with an insurer under the most recent program.

These proposed changes will lead to substantial confusion among participants and loss of access to individual providers not enrolled in a chosen plan or a default plan if no choice was made. Moreover, it is unclear that the proposed new direction will significantly benefit the Husky population or lead to cost savings. While I understand the desire to attract additional interest in the Charter Oak Health Plan by including the HUSKY program in the RFP, I am concerned for the disruption of HUSKY participants -- choosing another insurer with a potentially different group of health care providers so soon after negotiating through a major realignment of insurers.

H.B. 5618 seeks to stabilize the current situation, and carefully study our options for the most effective and efficient delivery of Husky services, with a goal of implementing any new change -- if warranted -- by July 1, 2009.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 5618.