



House of Representatives

File No. 944

General Assembly

January Session, 2009

(Reprint of File No. 324)

Substitute House Bill No. 5172
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 11, 2009

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CONNECTICUT CLEARINGHOUSE TO
PROVIDE HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION TO INDIVIDUALS
AND SMALL EMPLOYERS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) (a) There is established a
2 program which shall be known as the "Connecticut Clearinghouse", to
3 be administered by the Health Reinsurance Association established in
4 section 38a-556 of the general statutes, through which individuals and
5 small employers may obtain information about available health
6 insurance policies and health care plans.

7 (b) Said association shall, in consultation with the Insurance
8 Commissioner and the Healthcare Advocate, develop, within available
9 appropriations, a web site, telephone number or other method to serve
10 as a clearinghouse for information about individual and small
11 employer health insurance policies and health care plans that are
12 available to consumers in this state, including, but not limited to, the
13 Medicaid program, the HUSKY Plan, state-administered general
14 assistance, the Charter Oak Health Plan set forth in section 17b-311 of

15 the general statutes, the Municipal Employee Health Insurance Plan
 16 set forth in subsection (i) of section 5-259 of the general statutes, and
 17 any individual or small employer health insurance policies or health
 18 care plans an insurer, health care center or other entity chooses to list
 19 with the Connecticut Clearinghouse.

20 (c) Such method developed pursuant to subsection (b) of this section
 21 shall use interactive tools or technology to provide a consumer with a
 22 list of health insurance policies or health care plans that, based on the
 23 responses provided by such consumer, may be appropriate for such
 24 consumer's circumstances.

25 (d) The Insurance Commissioner shall establish procedures for the
 26 Health Reinsurance Association to confirm with the Insurance
 27 Department that a policy or plan listed with the Connecticut
 28 Clearinghouse is approved to be sold in this state and that the insurer,
 29 health care center or other entity that offers such policy or plan is
 30 authorized to do business in this state. Such procedures shall include,
 31 but not be limited to, a timetable for such list to be updated on a
 32 regular basis, but not less than every ninety days.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2009	New section

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill creates a Connecticut Clearinghouse to be administered by the Health Reinsurance Association (HRA), a nonprofit legal entity, and does not result in a fiscal impact.

House "A" requires the HRA to consult with the Healthcare Advocate, as well as the Insurance Commissioner identified in the underlying bill, to develop a website and other information sharing tools. The development of the above is to be accomplished within available appropriations. No additional resources have been provided for this purpose within sHB 6365 (the budget bill, as favorably reported by the Appropriations Committee).

The Out Years

None

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5172 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CONNECTICUT CLEARINGHOUSE TO PROVIDE HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION TO INDIVIDUALS AND SMALL EMPLOYERS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill establishes the Connecticut Clearinghouse, from which people and small employers (those with 50 and fewer employees) may get information about health insurance policies and health care plans available in Connecticut. These include Medicaid, HUSKY, state-administered general assistance (SAGA), Charter Oak, the Municipal Employee Health Insurance Plan (MEHIP), and any individual or small employer health insurance policies or health care plans an insurer, HMO, or other entity chooses to list with the clearinghouse.

It requires the Health Reinsurance Association (HRA) to (1) administer the clearinghouse and (2) in consultation with the insurance commissioner and healthcare advocate and within available appropriations, develop an interactive web site, telephone number, or other method for giving information on available plans that, based on a consumer's responses, may be appropriate for his or her circumstances.

The bill requires the commissioner to establish procedures for HRA to confirm with the Insurance Department that (1) a policy or plan listed with the clearinghouse is approved for sale in Connecticut and (2) the entity offering it is authorized to do business here. The procedures must require updating the list at least every 90 days.

*House Amendment "A" requires (1) consultation with the

healthcare advocate for development of the clearinghouse and (2) the development to be done within available appropriations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2009

BACKGROUND

Health Reinsurance Association

The legislature created HRA to provide comprehensive health insurance to people who cannot obtain insurance from commercial insurers (i.e., to serve as the high risk pool). By law, all Connecticut health insurers and HMOs are (1) HRA members and (2) assessed for its losses. HRA's board of directors is composed of nine individuals selected by the participating member companies.

HRA also serves as the state's acceptable alternative mechanism for complying with the guaranteed issue option in the individual market required under federal law (HIPAA). The law requires HRA to offer special health care plans to low-income individuals and certain small employers.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Insurance and Real Estate Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/12/2009)