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**Testimony of the Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians
CT ENT Society
CT Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society**

On

**SB 46, An Act Concerning Transparency of Medical Loss Ratio Information
Presented to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee**

By

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Good morning Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana, and distinguished members of the Insurance Committee. My name is Steven Thornquist, M.D. I am the Secretary of the Connecticut State Medical Society and Past President of the CT Society of Eye Physicians and I am here representing over 700 physicians practicing ophthalmology, dermatology and ENT medicine in Connecticut- I am here today to support SB46 a bill that would provide real and useful information on the efficiencies of the organizations looking to contract and manage healthcare premium dollars for consumers and business' and provide this information in the form of a standard ratio of premium dollars and direct medical expenses at the point of purchase.

People and businesses in the United States are facing economic challenges that are unprecedented in our lifetime, and it has become increasingly important for patients to become informed consumers and partners in their own health care. Currently, there are physician profiles available which allows patients to research their providers, and with the growing popularity of the World Wide Web, it is easier than ever for them to select a highly skilled and expertly qualified physician. Patients routinely use the web to learn more about their health problems and the

treatment options, prognosis, and other resources available today. Consumer health care education, however, comes to an abrupt halt when it comes to insurance companies and Managed care organizations.

We spend a great deal of time selecting our providers, who may or may not be “in-network”, but we have only limited access to information that would enable us to make informed decisions about the insurers we “hire” to manage our healthcare dollars in an efficient manner. This includes the details about insurers that actually provide coverage for the various treatment options available and their efficiency in managing premium dollars. Too often, we as consumers review only the cost of the premium and the provider networks to see if our “doc” is there, when making a choice on which insurer is better. Consumers need more information to make informed decisions on the overall performance of the carrier. They need to know how much of their healthcare premium is being spent on direct healthcare costs. Doesn't it make sense for consumers to purchase a policy which is reasonably priced and uses more of their premium dollars on benefits versus administrative costs- including run-away bonus compensation packages for CEOs and marketing expenses?

SB 46 is a good start to providing this much needed transparency. Another bill dealing with transparency SB457 had a public hearing last week. This bill is another piece to the Transparency picture- it required that the Insurance Department post the medical loss ratios on the Consumer Report Card. By passing both of these bills we will begin to educate the consumer and

identify the medical expenses in the healthcare premium equation and look to build more efficiencies in an industry that has gone far too long unchecked. Transparency is the best way to insure competition and better performance and to establish the checks and balances needed to insure cost control and accountability.

We as Americans cannot afford another industry bailout nor can we afford the ever rising healthcare premiums which seem disconnected- in the eyes of healthcare providers- to direct healthcare costs. Healthcare providers across the state hope you will take this important step towards Transparency and shed some light on the high price of healthcare premiums and ultimately make us all better consumers with this knowledge.

Please support both SB 47 and SB457 and help bring Connecticut out of the darkness.

Thank you