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Dear Senator Harp, Representative Reynolds and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee:

I am writing to urge your support for the Office of the Healthcare Advocate. I write on my own behalf as well as that of a friend, Sylvia Zeldis, who is so busy trying to secure medically recommended treatment for cancer that she is unable to write to you herself. Sylvia, like many others, lives with a serious cancer. Despite the fact that multiple doctors who care for her have recommended a particular surgery and medication regimen, her insurance company (Anthem) is currently refusing the treatment. So while battling her life threatening illness, Sylvia must also do battle with Anthem. The Office of the Healthcare Advocate ensures that health insurance companies meet their contractual obligations and pay for the medically necessary, sometimes life-saving, treatment that patients need.

I am shocked that Governor Rell would recommend the elimination of the position of the Healthcare Advocate and I seriously question her motivation. As I understand it, eliminating the Office of the Healthcare Advocate will not help the state's budget or bottom line because this office is funded by the Insurance Fund (paid for by insurance companies). Cuts to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate go back as a credit to the Insurance Industry and do not help close the budget deficit. Why then would we eliminate this office which has helped more than 2,000 patients in the last year. I believe that eliminating the Office of the Healthcare Advocate would directly and immediately harm the citizens of Connecticut. I know that for my friend, Sylvia, this would be a harsh blow.

In these difficult financial times we must, I believe, keep our focus not only on the "bottom line" but also on what kind of a community we want to be. I urge you to support the continuation of the Office of the Healthcare Advocate because I believe it represents some of the best of what we can do and be for our state residents.

Sincerely,


Arlene Havens

Cc: OHA