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Testimony of Phil Sherwood
Deputy Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
Thursday, March 12, 2009

Good afternoon Senator Looney, Representative Janowski and other members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Phil Sherwood and I am the Deputy Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG). CCAG has approximately 25,000 members and is currently the state's oldest and largest public interest group.

CCAG would like to express strong support for the nomination of Kevin Lembo to be the Healthcare Advocate.

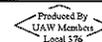
The Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA) was created by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1999 in an effort to protect and help consumers as they navigate MCO health plans. Under Mr. Lembo's leadership, OHA has worked with thousands of consumers to inform them of their rights and responsibilities, and has been a tireless advocate for individuals who have been denied treatment or reimbursement. Mr. Lembo's expertise in communicating and identifying issues that may need legislative or executive action has been enormously valuable to the state's consumers and to this legislature.

An agency is only as good as their staff and their leadership. OHA's value and success in advocacy has been undeniable.

- OHA's assistance resulted in \$5,200,000 in consumer savings last year in overturned claims
- For Every dollar OHA spends from the Insurance Fund, there is a return of \$5.20 to patients
- Under Lembo's leadership, the OHA has seen an increase on the return of investment

Graphs from (OHA) 2008 Annual Report:

YEAR	Investment (i.e., budget)	SAVINGS	Return on Investment
2008	\$1,032,611.00	\$5,238,893.00	5.07
2007	\$993,119.00	\$4,391,353.00	4.42
2006	\$544,672.00	\$2,514,825.00	4.62
2005	\$581,414.00	\$1,487,895.00	2.56
2004	\$479,328.00	\$531,823.00	1.11
2003	\$709,271.00	\$205,665.00	0.29
2002	\$686,253.00	\$410,294.00	0.60
Total	\$5,026,668.00	\$14,780,748.00	





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Recently, some have suggested that consolidations or eliminations of watchdog agencies such as the OHA should be considered. We could not disagree more. Thanks to Mr. Lembo's leadership and the effectiveness and efficiency of OHA, the debate should instead be focused on expanding or increasing the agency's responsibilities during these tough times.

Consumer Complaints Fall Into a Few Major Issue Categories:

TOP TEN COMPLAINTS BY ISSUE 2006 thru 2008				
	2006	2007	2008	TOTAL
Consumer Denied Service or Treatment	295	302	324	921
Billing Problem	133	179	202	514
Consumer - Other	160	177	153	490
Consumer Enrollment or Eligibility	178	154	156	488
Consumer Education or Counseling	133	148	205	486
Denial of Claim by MCO	84	102	95	281
Benefit Design	102	78	97	277
Service Not Covered	76	66	59	201
Denial of Payment	49	64	54	167
Poor Customer Service	57	47	53	157

Given the rapidly declining economic climate, there is no doubt that the need for the OHA will increase in future years, and that strong and proven leadership within the agency is more important than ever. We believe that Mr. Lembo represents and has proven that leadership.

I would like to thank the committee for their valuable time and consideration.

Phil Sherwood
Deputy Director, CCAG

