

Statement of Brian T. Lynch, O.D.
before the
Judiciary Committee
In Support of S.B. 1004
March 20, 2009

Sen. McDonald, Rep. Lawlor and members of the committee:

My name is Brian Lynch. I am an Optometric Doctor and practice in the Town of Branford. In addition, I serve as legislative committee chairman of the Connecticut Association of Optometrists (CAO). I am offering comments on behalf of CAO in support of Senate Bill 1004, *An Act Concerning Cooperative Health Care Arrangements and Standards in Contracts Between Health Insurers and Health Care Providers*.

This legislation will level the playing field between health care professionals and managed care organizations.

It would permit professionals, like myself, to develop and arrange cooperative activities with my peers—without fearing that we would run afoul of anti-trust laws.

We believe having the ability to do so will increase efficiencies, reduce costs and provide better access to health care for patients. The ultimate beneficiary of these changes will be consumers in the State of Connecticut.

How would S.B. 1004 do this? The current law has the effect of limiting the ability of health care professionals to share facilities, equipment or patient loads. We can leverage cost savings if only we could talk to one another about the financial arrangements that exist with managed care companies.

Consumers will be protected. There will be a competitive market.

Before engaging in such a “cooperative arrangement,” the participants have the option of notifying the Attorney General of their intent to do so in order to protect against any inference of anti-trust activity.

SB 1004 also contains important safeguards for health care professionals in whatever contracts are signed and placed in effect. MCOs will be required to explain the methodology that has led to the calculation of reimbursement and payment for medical procedures provided to a patient. They will also be barred from unilaterally changing any provision of a signed contract, as will health care providers who have signed such contracts.

You are the committee that is known for addressing the issues of fairness and equity.

S.B. 1004 will bring both to the relationships between providers and MCOs. We urge you to support this important legislation.

Thank you.