

5295



Testimony of Victoria Veltri
General Counsel

Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
In support of HB 5295
March 2, 2010

Good morning, Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana, Senator Caligiuri, Representative D'Amelio and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. For the record, I am Vicki Veltri, General Counsel with the Office Healthcare Advocate ("OHA"). OHA is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

OHA supports HB 5295, *An Act Concerning Municipalities and Prescription Drug Plans*. Municipalities are struggling under the weight of their insurance costs. Prescription drug coverage is often segregated from traditional medical coverage in town insurance packages. Prescription drug costs can be a significant cost driver the leads to narrow prescription drug lists. Since the Comptroller's office currently runs a robust self-insured prescription drug plan for state employees, it makes sense to allow municipalities to pool their prescription drug costs with the State's. The bill properly requires SEBAC's approval before coverage can be offered to non-state employees. This bill offers municipalities an excellent option for maintaining a prescription drug benefit.

HB 5295 effectively expands the State of Connecticut employee pool for prescription coverage, which should increase the state's leverage in bargaining with pharmaceutical benefit managers ("PBMs"). It may also decrease the number of unnecessary office and hospital visits by ensuring access to needed medications for many state residents. Most importantly, access to the state's self-insured prescription drug product will drive down costs for municipalities.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. If you have any questions, you may contact me at victoria.veltri@ct.gov or 860-297-3982.