



160 St. Ronan Street, New Haven, CT 06511-2390 (203) 865-0587 FAX (203) 865-4997

**Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony on**  
**Senate Bill 130 An Act Concerning Cancelled Doctors' Appointments**  
**General Law Committee**  
**February 16, 2010**

Senator Calapietro, Representative Shapiro and Members of the General Law, on behalf of the more 7,000 members of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you on **Senate Bill 130 An Act Concerning Cancelled Doctors' Appointments**. We appreciate language added to this year's bill to allow physician's the ability to establish a policy for missed appointment provided notice is conspicuously posted;

Physicians in Connecticut are small business owners who are a critical part of the health care industry in Connecticut. Our physicians deliver their services in nearly 2,800 physician offices throughout the state are in four cases out of five, small businesses with overhead expenses. Physicians face increasing overhead costs like rent and salaries for office staff. The physicians rely on appointment scheduling to keep their practices going, with patient appointments often scheduled weeks or even months ahead.

With reimbursements declining, liability premiums one of the highest in the country, administrative costs skyrocketing due to the increasing burdens of dealing with payers, physicians have to use every part of their day to generate revenue. Additionally, the structure of the medical services payment systems provides for varying levels of reimbursement only when services are provided. When a patient makes an appointment the patient is reserving time specifically for themselves. Typically, if a patient finds that he/she is unable to make the appointment offices will require a brief notification period, usually of 24 hours. Notice of the policy is often provided to the patient when beginning a relationship with the office, posted conspicuously in offices and provided in other forms such as on mailed bills and statements. Such notification periods allow the office the efficiently operate and also provides an opportunity to assist the patients in identifying an alternate time that fits their needs.

CMS allows physicians to charge Medicare patients for missed appointments, provided that they do not discriminate against Medicare beneficiaries but also charge non-Medicare patients for missed appointments. CMS views the missed appointment fee not as a charge for a service itself but as a charge for a "missed business opportunity." More importantly they understand the demands of schedule in a physician office.