

Testimony before the Human Services Committee
S.B. 139 An Act Concerning Independent Monitoring of the HUSKY Program
S.B. 32 An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning
Social Services
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Good Afternoon Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Committee. My name is Jeffrey Walter and I am President and CEO of Rushford Center, a comprehensive non-profit community provider of mental health and addiction prevention and treatment services. I also serve as co-chair, with Senator Jonathan Harris, of the CT Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council.

I am here today to speak on two bills that are before the Committee. I would like to lend my support to SB 139, An Act Concerning Independent Monitoring of the HUSKY Program. As Connecticut's largest public health care plan, HUSKY consumes a significant portion of the State's annual budget. The program is responsible for ensuring good health outcomes for more than 300,000 low income state residents. As a member of the Medicaid Managed Care Council since 1996, I am deeply respectful of the diligence with which the Dept. of Social Services administers this complex program, with limited resources. The Department's own reporting capabilities have been ably supplemented over the years by very helpful quality reports from CT Voices for Children. Unfortunately, this resource is discretionary and constantly at risk, due to budget constraints. SB 139 would help ensure that critical information regarding the health status of HUSKY children and adults is available to the public, and to policy makers, on an ongoing basis.

I would also like to take this opportunity to make a comment regarding SB 32, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendation Concerning Social Services. I am opposed to Section 68 which eliminates the Medicaid Managed Care Council. The Council provides a public forum for discussion and understanding of the complex factors that affect access to, and the quality of, health care services for HUSKY and other Medicaid recipients. I urge the committee to remove this section from the bill.

I thank you for your consideration.

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