



CONNECTICUT ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
CARING FOR CONNECTICUT'S FAMILIES

Statement in Support of
Raised Bill 403 – An Act Concerning Health Information Technology
Public Health Committee
March 12, 2010

The Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) submits this statement in support of Raised Bill 403 – An Act Concerning Health Information Technology. We do, however, have some concerns with the bill as it is currently written.

We should begin by stating that we believe that the Health Information Exchange (HIE) is of vital importance to improving the quality and efficiency of healthcare for our patients. Given its importance, it is imperative that primary care physicians are given a state level effort to help facilitate this so that we don't get pulled in too many directions by the regional interests of hospitals, insurers etc. Further, while Connecticut is making some progress on HIE, it does not currently have a coordinated and well-communicated plan for accomplishing this for all of its citizens (unlike some of our neighboring states). There must be one clearly defined plan that is well communicated.

Primary care physicians are presently adopting EMRs at a rate that is higher than the national average (about 40 -50% within a year or so). However, we are finding it very difficult to use the systems in a meaningful way when they are not connected to the labs, hospitals, and specialists with which they are responsible for coordinating care.

Real care coordination is fundamental and will only serve to help patients who will see health improvements and satisfaction with a demonstrated reduction in unnecessary testing, increases in preventive service delivery and connections to their doctors. We believe that HIE is a public good that improves outcomes and that the reduced costs benefit all parties including the State Medicaid program.

When determining whether or not this bill will move forward, we would urge this Committee to ensure that the language of the bill is changed to include state funding as an appropriate source of funds.

The proposed legislation - creation of a non-profit private / government collaborative entity the E-Health Institute - is a common approach in other states and has the best chance of success in CT, but it must remain transparent to all appropriate stakeholders in order to ensure trust. We suggest that the E-Health Institute include a number of physicians who have been actually using EMR in an advanced way to either be on the committee or be active advisors to the committee to give insight as to how things actually works, so as to avoid costly and timely blind pathways and to facilitate a rapid deployment of measures to get EMR's up and running in a meaningful way. CAFP stands ready to actively participate in the discussions and to solicit input from and educate its members to create a conduit to primary care clinicians.

For more information, please call:

**Craig Czarsty, M.D., Legislative Chair
Mark Schuman, Executive Vice President
Melissa Dempsey, Director of Government Relations**

(860) 243-3977