



**Public Health Committee, Insurance and Real Estate Committee
and Human Services Committee
February 14, 2011
American Cancer Society Testimony**

FTR

HB 6308 – An Act Establishing The Connecticut Healthcare Partnership

Cancer is a major public health problem in Connecticut and the United States, and is our nation's second leading cause of death, killing more people every year than every war in the 20th century combined. About 20,000 Connecticut residents are expected to develop cancer in 2011 and 7,000 Connecticut residents will die this year from cancer. However, cancer is also the most preventable and curable among our nation's chronic diseases.

But what good do all the prevention, early detection and treatment programs and services do if they are too costly and therefore not accessible?

The American Cancer Society believes that all people should have unimpeded access to comprehensive, quality health care services. This care includes cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation and long-term care through the end of life. The Society recognizes that serious gaps exist in accessibility, affordability, adequacy, administrative simplicity and quality of health care for many individuals and employers, which must be addressed by the nation as a whole.

We must apply equally what we know about cancer prevention, early detection and treatment to ensure that all people—especially those in communities that suffer a disproportionate burden of cancer—benefit from major cancer breakthroughs. One step to that end is to increase the number of individuals with meaningful health insurance coverage and affordable access to the full range of high quality cancer-related services, prevention through end of life.

HB 6308 would help Connecticut take a step towards meaningful access and help ease the financial burden on health care by allowing non-state public employers, municipal-related employers, small employers and nonprofit employers to join the state employee health plan. Adding these employers to the 200,000 insured state workers would create greater leverage when the health plan is put out to bid to major insurers and provide potentially significant savings for cities, towns, small businesses and nonprofit agencies at a time when the cost of health care is spiraling out of control.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to inform this process and are available to work with the members of these committees to ensure greater access to health care for all of Connecticut's citizens. HB 6308 is an important step that will help ensure that more people get coverage and therefore improved access to care and we urge your support.

Thank you.