

COMMENTS REGARDING COMMITTEE BILL NO. 16  
AAC STANDARDS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER CONTRACTS

Member Health Funds

- Bricklayers Local 1 CT
- Connecticut Carpenters
- Connecticut Pipe Trades
- Electrical Workers Local 35
- Electrical Workers Local 90
- Heat & Frost Insulators & Allied Workers Local 33 CT
- Iron Workers Local 15 & 424
- NE Health Care Employees District 1199, SEIU
- Operating Engineers Local 478
- Painters & Allied Trades District Council 11
- Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 131
- Roofers Local 9
- Roofers Local 12
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 40
- Southern CT IBEW

Our Coalition represents approximately 75,000 covered lives in Connecticut. We oppose Committee Bill No. 16 as drafted because of the provisions of Section 5.

In summary, Section 5 of this bill provides that dental network provider contracts may not require participating dentists to provide services or procedures at a set fee to the network's enrollees, unless those services are covered benefits under the enrollees' dental plan. While at first look this may seem like a reasonable provision, we believe it is in fact entirely unreasonable and will have far-reaching consequences for all participants in employer sponsored dental plans – literally hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents.

First, agreeing to set fees for specific services and procedures is what physicians, dentists and other health professionals commit to in return for belonging to a medical or dental network in order to ensure prompt payment and to gain access to the network's entire enrolled population.

Second, most medical and dental plans do not cover every conceivable service or procedure that may be provided. Maybe they should but in reality they don't. With respect to our member health funds, it is the sole responsibility of the boards of trustees of each health plan, in consultation with plan professionals, to determine the plan of covered benefits in a way that provides the best value of limited resources to the members of the health plan. This is true cost containment at work. That concept is critically important today, as our collectively-bargained member funds are working to find ways to pay for the costs associated with the mandates of the federal Affordable Care Act.

Third, when an enrollee receives services or procedures which are not covered by his or her dental plan, the network participating dentist still receives the contracted rate for the service. The only difference is that the dentist is paid by the enrollee instead of the dental plan. And in most cases the dentist knows this in advance and may require payment at the time the procedure is provided. So who is harmed?

Fourth, if this provision is enacted into law the result will be that hundreds of thousands of CT residents who have dental coverage may be charged any amount for services that are not covered by their dental plan. That is to say that as soon as such a provision becomes effective, enrollees will immediately become liable for potentially dramatic increases in out of pocket costs for any dental services or procedures that their dental plan does not cover. In such a case – and in today's economy – many, many people could be financially harmed. And of course, the participating dentists will still enjoy the enrollees' patronage. Certainly we wouldn't expect people to shop around for a different dentist who charges less for specific services; they will want to continue to use their network participating dentist who provides the rest of their dental care.

Finally, we believe the current arrangement whereby providers agree to provide a full range of services and procedures at set prices for those procedures, whether covered by an enrollee's dental plan or not, is a fair arrangement that helps to hold down the rate of increase in dental care. Adoption of Section 5 of Committee Bill No. 16 will increase costs immediately and the people paying those increases in many cases will not be able to afford them.

Respectfully Submitted, Bob Tessier

1/24/2011

Robert F. Tessier, Executive Director  
(860) 249-6100 • (fax) 249-6500  
www.ctcoalition.org  
coalition@ctcoalition.org

Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 231443 • Hartford, CT 06123

Street Address  
942 Main Street • Hartford, CT 06103

