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Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony
Senate Bill 921 An Act Concerning A State Health Insurance Exchange
House Bill 6323 An Act Making Changes to the Insurance Statutes Pursuant to the Federal Patient Protection and Accountable Care Act and Establishment of a State Health Partnership Program
Human Services Committee, Insurance and Real Estate Committee and Public Health Committee
February 14, 2011

Senators Crisco, Musto and Stillman, Representatives Megna, Tercyiak, Ritter and members of the Insurance and Real Estate, Human Services and Public Health Committees, my name is Matthew Katz and I am the executive vice president of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS). On behalf of our more than 7,000 physicians and physician-in-training members, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today on Senate Bill 921 An Act Concerning A State Health Insurance Exchange and House Bill 6323 An Act Making Conforming Changes to the Insurance Statutes Pursuant to the Federal Patient Protection and Accountable Care Act, and Establishment of a State Health Partnership Program. We have before us an opportunity to ensure that under your leadership, the state of Connecticut remains at the forefront of health system reform and continues to improve and increase health insurance coverage to Connecticut's residents, and more importantly access to medically necessary services.

The most important message I can impart upon you today is that CSMS wholeheartedly supports the establishment of an exchange at the state level rather than defaulting to the federal government model. The decisions as to what is best for the physicians, patients and residents of Connecticut are too important to be made in Washington: we need to have the control and authority at the state level to make decisions that best represent the current health insurance market and medical practice environment in this state. A state-level exchange would allow all stakeholders in Connecticut, such as a spectrum of physicians practicing in different specialties and care sites, to determine what is best for our state and the patients who need to access medical care.

I am here before you today on behalf of our members to tell you that physician involvement in the development of a state-level insurance exchange is not only critical, but essential for the effective management and implementation of such an entity in Connecticut. As drafted, only one appointment in either proposal exists for "a person representing health care providers." While all providers add value to the system; it is imperative that at least one spot exists for a **privately practicing physician** with an understanding of insurance delivery and benefits at the practice level -- where medical care is determined and provided. This appointment should not be limited to any one specialty of physician, but should be a practicing physician who experiences what it is like today to assist patients in navigating the complicated maze of medical benefit structure and design to deliver medically necessary care.

The establishment of the exchange offers us an opportunity to do what is right for the people of Connecticut. However, in the establishment of qualified plans the development of an exchange also presents a challenge. It is imperative that when faced with that challenge, Connecticut guarantees that

participating plans adhere to the hard-fought patient protections that currently exist in statute. The development of an exchange is not an excuse to eviscerate patient protections. Health plans in the exchange should and must abide by the same high standards tied to Connecticut statutes and regulations that we ask health insurers to comply with today. Qualifying plans must conform to the appropriate definition of medical necessity as established in statute of by the Medical Inefficiency Committee for HUSKY and Charter Oak plans.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today. Our physicians stand at the ready to assist in the development of an appropriate exchange and seek for comprehensive representation that allows them to do so.