



Community Providers Association
Caring for Connecticut.

Public Hearing
Labor Committee
March 8, 2012

S.B. 259 An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership

I am Mary Anne O'Neill, Director of Public Policy at the Connecticut Community Providers Association. I am pleased to provide testimony today in support of S.B. 259, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership. CCPA represents organizations, many of which are nonprofit organizations, that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant challenges including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, and developmental and physical disabilities.

The CT Healthcare Partnership would allow nonprofit employers to seek healthcare coverage for their employees under the state employee plan. This legislation comes at a critical time. Our members have experienced rising healthcare premiums. In many cases they have had to increase employee contributions for healthcare coverage, as well as increasing co-pays and deductibles.

The CT Healthcare Partnership will provide an opportunity for nonprofit employers to provide healthcare coverage as part of a larger pool of workers, realizing the cost-effectiveness and savings that accrue to the larger group and potentially increasing employee benefits.

We do have several suggestions for improving this legislation, however, including allowing nonprofit employers and employees to be represented on the Private Sector Health Care Advisory Committee and revising the definition of "Nonprofit employer" to refer to section 26 USC 501, the section of the Internal Revenue Code that grants tax-exempt status to nonprofit organizations.

Finally, I would ask for some clarification about how this legislation relates to the provisions in Public Act 11-58, An Act Concerning Healthcare Reform, which authorizes the Comptroller to offer coverage to nonprofit employers under a partnership plan beginning in January 2013. We are unclear if both options will be available going forward, or if this bill is intended to replace the partnership plan in Public Act 11-58.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important bill.

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