



CITIZENS FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
Corporate Responsibility Campaign

S.B. 368 – An Act Concerning the Health information Technology Exchange of Connecticut

My name is Karen Schuessler and I am the Director of Citizens for Economic Opportunity (CEO). CEO is a coalition of community and labor groups addressing health care reform and corporate responsibility.

I support S.B. 368 because it is important to have strict standards under which a patient's health information may be disclosed through the electronic health information system. All of us have a right to privacy that is guaranteed in our Constitution and what could be more private than your healthcare information. Once your healthcare information has been shared, there is no way to retrieve it and halt the damage that has already been done. HIV status, mental health issues, abortion history, and genetic information are highly personal and should be strongly protected.

In order for the health information exchange to be successful, one must build patient support and providing adequate security is a major component in that. In order to ensure trust and participation in a statewide exchange, patients must be able to control what happens to their medical information and they must understand the risks and benefits.

Opt-in patient consent models have worked successfully in other states. New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont have opt-in policies. A Massachusetts study found that 88 to 92% of patients participate in their opt-in system. According to the Rochester Regional Health Information Organization in 2011 over one third of the entire population in the area consented and tens of thousands of new consents are coming in every month. In Rochester between 97 and 98% of patients sign consent forms and Western New York's rate is 94%. In order to achieve such a high success rate, grassroots public education campaigns were undertaken. Patients are enthusiastic about the opt-in option because they know it will allow greater access to information to help them make more informed health care decisions.

I urge you to pass S.B. 368 because providers benefit when patients trust the system. I appreciate your help in ensuring that Connecticut provides a strong and workable health information exchange.

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