



**Testimony in support of Senate Bill 1026 An Act Concerning An Adequate Provider  
Network To Ensure Positive Health Outcomes For Low Income Resident  
Human Services Committee  
March 5, 2013**

Senator Slosberg, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee, on behalf of the 8,500 physicians and physician-in-training members of Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) and the Connecticut Chapters of the American College of Physicians (ACP) and the American College of Surgeons (ACS), thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to in support of Senate Bill 1026 An Act Concerning An Adequate Provider Network to Ensure Positive Health Outcomes for Low Income residents.

The language before you today establishes a commission to study obstacles that the current Medicaid program faces that serve as barriers to healthcare services for low income residents within the program. Recommendations will be made to improve greater access to providers in the program as well as health outcomes for recipients across racial and ethnic lines.

CSMS has worked incredibly hard in conjunction with legislators and the Department of Social Services (DSS), as well as their contractors, over many years to address network adequacy issues that hamper access within the Medicaid program. Yet, we know that our experience is no different than that of the broad and comprehensive groups tasked by this bill to "study" the issue. Individually, we all can identify shortcomings and recommend solutions. However, these are often specific to one service area or specific "clientele." This proposed legislation provides an opportunity for a coordinated effort to review and discuss a continuum of care in a manner that is necessary to ensure integration of services throughout an entire spectrum.

Many of the organizations who would ultimately be involved in the commission have spent an incredible amount of time trying to address issues this bill hopes to alleviate. CSMS has worked tirelessly over the course of the last 5 years to raise awareness and make recommendations tied to the problems that exist associated with inadequate networks to serve this patient population. CSMS has studied the issue through surveys of our membership and non-member physicians who provide care (and don't provide care) tied to Husky and other related programs. It is clear that there are significant barriers to access to care, including low reimbursement and excessive administrative burdens placed on physicians, including retrospective audits and reviews that

often misinterpret and misrepresent Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes, guidelines and conventions. CSMS has also spent more than four years engaging in studies tied to health care disparities and health inequities, many of the findings published in peer review journals, and has found significant shortcomings in the level of information, education and support available not only to recipients, but also physicians and other providers of medical care. These studies and results suggest another reason why we are excited at the possibility of the passage of this legislation to further review how best to improve the network of qualified, trained medical providers, but it must include a review of behavioral and mental health care access as well. This legislation provides an opportunity for this committee to recognize the efforts of each specific profession/organization to be included in the commission and the need now for us to bring our collective knowledge together with the use of consulting professionals to collectively and collaboratively present solutions that will increase the quality of our Medicaid network and address issues of racial, ethnic and cultural disparities that unfortunately continue to exist today.

Please support Senate Bill 1026