Quality is Our Bottom Line

Public Health Committee Public Hearing
Friday, March 8, 2013

Connecticut Association of Health Plans
Testimony in Opposition to

Proposed H.B. No. 5744 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION

The Connecticut Association of Health Plans respectfully urges opposition to HB 6158 and also to HB 5744 - to the extent it also seeks to eliminate the provider mandate with respect to the purchase of vaccines through the Department of Public Health.

The Governor's proposed budget for 2014 and 2015 significantly increases the Immunization Services line item under DPH from $18.4 million in 2013 to $29.9 million in 2014 and again to $32.2 million in 2015 representing a $13.8 million increase in just two years.

Connecticut's health insurers have been pleased to be engaged by the state in developing a successful and comprehensive vaccination program. Keeping our children healthy is of absolute importance and priority.

However, by virtue of the immunization assessment now levied on the health insurance industry by the Department of Insurance, the state's health insurers and other third party administrators now privately fund the vaccine program administered by the Department of Public Health.

To provide some perspective, the budget for the Department of Insurance (DOI) – which is also assessed to and paid for by the industry – amounts to $27.9 million. In next twelve months, the immunization assessment will clearly surpass the assessment levied to fund the entire DOI.

We have been working closely with the Office of Policy & Management to better understand the nature of the increase and how the level of needed funding is determined and we appreciate their responsiveness to our questions given the sizable line item. ***We are also advocating for a formal reconciliation process*** to assure not only that the funding and assessments are aligned appropriately, but also to assure that the intent of the overall initiative - which was to achieve the highest immunization rates possible by virtue of purchasing vaccines in the most cost efficient manner available - is being fully realized.

Now is not the time to change the provider mandate portion of the initiative which requires that vaccines be purchased from the state, lest we all end up paying twice for the same immunizations. Without the mandate, insurers and thereby employers, individuals and the State will all bear substantially increased costs.

We ask that you oppose HB 5744 and HB 6158. Many thanks for your consideration.

280 Trumbull Street | 27th Floor | Hartford, CT 06103-3597 | 860.275.8372 | Fax 860.541.4923 | www.ctahp.com