

H.B. No. 5030 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015.

February 14, 2014

Good afternoon,

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics represents nearly 1000 primary care and specialty pediatricians in the state.

We are here today to speak to the Department of Social Services Budget.

We would like to take a moment to thank the Governor and the Legislature for the increase in payments in 2013 to primary care providers, in our case, those who take care of thousands of children. The increases were long in coming, but when they did come, they were very welcomed. However, we knew there was a chance that they would go down again.

We knew that increasing the payments to primary care providers would do several things: it would more than likely increase the number of providers who would take Medicaid patients, and it would increase access to primary care for the patients. We saw this when the dental community was paid more, the increased number of dentists participating in Medicaid, and the number of people who in turn saw a dentist.

For years, primary care pediatricians lost money each time they saw a HUSKY patient. But, most of the pediatricians and many other physicians did it any way. The increases in fees that took place in 2013 made a great difference especially to those practices that see almost exclusively Medicaid/HUSKY patients, but also to those practices that only see a few HUSKY patients.

The best news is that more primary care pediatricians and providers are seeing more Medicaid patients. In a report from DSS, it shows an increase of over 5,000 providers. It also shows a decrease in hospital admissions, days in the hospital, ED visits, and in non-urgent ED visit costs. We believe this is good for patients, for providers, families, and the State of CT budget.

We encourage you to keep the rates that are being paid to primary care physicians the same.

Thank you for your dedication to the health of the children in Connecticut.