



Office of the
Healthcare
Advocate
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony of Victoria Veltri
State Healthcare Advocate
Before the General Law Committee
In Support of SB 208
February 25, 2014**

Good afternoon, Representative Baram, Senator Doyle, Senator Witkos, Representative Carter, and members of the General Law Committee. For the record, I am Vicki Veltri, State Healthcare Advocate with the Office Healthcare Advocate ("OHA"). OHA is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

Senate Bill 208 represents an important measure in the preservation of consumer privacy. As the cost of healthcare is increasingly shifted to the consumer, the potential savings inherent in many of the pharmacy rewards programs will become ever more attractive to consumers.

It is important that consumers receive complete and detailed notice of their HIPAA rights and the intended or potential uses of their personal health information. The concept of informed consent requires that consumers have the opportunity to fully understand what they are agreeing to in return for the benefits of the pharmacy reward program. SB 208's requirement that retailers provide enrollees with this notice is central to the continued protection of consumer privacy.

The concept of adequate notice could be enhanced further by requiring retailers to include what

information is being provided and to whom, as well as how the retailer may utilize the information in conjunction with pharmaceutical or research companies. The notice should also be in plain language that and contain an introductory section that clearly summarizes the consumer's rights, potential uses of the information and consequences of enrolling in the rewards program.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver OHA's testimony today. If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at victoria.veltri@ct.gov.