



American Heart Association® | American Stroke Association®

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The Honorable, Terry Gerratana
The Honorable, Susan Johnson
Public Health Committee
Room 3000
Hartford, CT

March 5, 2014

The American Heart / Stroke Association supports House Bill 5386 An Act Concerning Care Coordination for Chronic Disease.

The American Heart Association has set a goal, by 2020 to improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20 percent. The novel focus of the new goal will be preventing heart disease and stroke, most notably by helping people identify and adopt healthier lifestyle choices.ⁱ

Chronic diseases – which include heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes – are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health problems. Leading a healthy lifestyle (avoiding tobacco use, being physically active, and eating well) greatly reduces a person’s risk for developing chronic disease. Access to high-quality and affordable prevention measures (including screening and appropriate follow-up) are essential steps in saving lives, reducing disability and lowering costs for medical care.

In Connecticut, heart disease accounted for 26% of deaths in Connecticut in 2005, while stroke caused 5% of deaths. In 2007, 26% of adults in Connecticut reported having high blood pressure (hypertension) and 38% of those screened reported having high blood cholesterol, which puts them at greater risk for developing heart disease and stroke.ⁱⁱ

Just looking at the economic burden of cardiovascular disease (CVD) to Connecticut, The department of Public Health reported that the total Connecticut CVD hospital charges in 2008 were about \$2.2 billion, with a median charge of \$23,172. About 33% of total CVD hospitalization charges were for CHD, 12% were for stroke, and 15% were for heart failure.¹⁰ Median hospital charges were \$34,792 for CHD, \$19,772 for stroke, and \$17,408 for heart failure. In contrast, the median charge for all hospital discharges in Connecticut was \$16,727.¹⁰ⁱⁱⁱ

CVD is just one of the Chronic Diseases that are preventable through good public policy and a commitment by the state to develop a workable comprehensive plan to address the public health crisis.

The Department of Public Health and its staff are incredibly dedicated to turning the tide of the human and economic impact Chronic Diseases has on our communities. The American Heart Association feels that supporting coordinated care for chronic disease, will bring the heightened attention and the appropriate agencies together to formulate scientifically based strategies that, can assist the legislature and the executive branch in an effort to save lives and reduce the costly burden of healthcare often associate with these chronic conditions.

By supporting coordinated care for chronic disease, the state will be putting in place the framework to realize real benefits from coordinated, collaborative implementation of a chronic disease plan to ensure the achievement of positive outcomes, efficient use of resources, implementation of evidence-based interventions, and dissemination of best practices across programs that would have a direct impact on reducing the burden of chronic disease for the top five chronic disease leading causes of death.

Thank you for considering our comments and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

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ⁱ http://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@swa/documents/downloadable/ucm_425189.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/states/pdf/connecticut.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hisr/pdf/2010cvd_burdendoc_final.pdf