

**Visels Pharmacy
714 Dixwell Ave
New Haven, CT 06511
203-562-6878**

Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee

February 27, 2015

HB 6824, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefor And Other Provisions Related to Revenue

Testimony of Edmund J. Funaro, Jr.

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee

My name is Edmund J. Funaro, Jr., Pharmacist and Director of Visels Pharmacy, New Haven, CT, a family owned and operated independent, retail pharmacy, serving the community since 1913. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to the decrease in Medicaid reimbursements to pharmacies proposed in H.B. No. 6824, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefor And Other Provisions Related to Revenue.

Visels Pharmacy is located in the underserved Dixwell/Newhallville neighborhood of New Haven. We provide a vast array of pharmacy and convenience services including free home delivery to our homebound patients. We have a staff of 18 full and part time employees, many hired from within the community we serve. We support many local community organizations and are considered an anchor business in this federally recognized Empowerment Zone.

The Governor's budget proposal decreasing Medicaid reimbursement to pharmacies from **AWP-16% + \$1.70 to AWP-18% + \$1.40** is unreasonable and is a cut that pharmacies cannot afford. We consider ourselves a valuable resource to our patients, providing individualized services, in sometimes complex and time consuming cases, to help assure a patient receives the necessary care. We take pride in our ability to assist our patients in navigating Medicaid issues hindering access to care such as third party liability determinations(TPL), preferred drug list requirements(PDL), prior authorizations(PA), durable medical equipment orders(DME) and provide the Medicaid mandated offer to counsel(OBRA 90).

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The challenges to a small business are enormous and the economic pressures on an independent, community retail pharmacy are ever increasing. The erosion of our patient base due to mandatory mail order, preferred Med D pharmacies with lower co-pays, improper prescription reimbursement caused by outdated generic MAC pricing, unreasonable Medicaid audit recoupments and this potential reduction in pharmacy reimbursement, if left unchecked, may cause irreparable financial harm and will certainly have a negative impact on our ability to serve our patients and community. We cannot remain a viable business if we are not adequately reimbursed for the goods and services we provide.

On behalf of Visels Pharmacy and all independent community pharmacies in the State of Connecticut, I sincerely hope that the Appropriations Committee will oppose any further Medicaid cuts in pharmacy reimbursement.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Edmund J. Funaro, Jr., R.Ph., MBA
Director
Visels Pharmacy
714 Dixwell Ave
New Haven, CT 06511
203-562-6878
visels@snet.net