

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
FEBRUARY 3, 2015

My name is Jennifer Herz and I am Assistant Counsel for the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA has been representing Connecticut's employers for 200 years and today is proud to say the vast majority of our members are small companies employing less than 50 people.

Connecticut's employers are very concerned with the cost and quality of healthcare. In a recent survey, CBIA's members listed healthcare costs as among the top 3 issues keeping them up at night – right behind national and state economy.¹ Connecticut's employers contribute to their employees' premiums and rising premiums make it more and more difficult for employers to help pay for their employees healthcare. Equally important, employers value the bottom line contribution of healthy employees because that means a productive, innovative workforce.

While CBIA is concerned about the cost of new mandates, we also appreciate the potential long term benefits of certain services/procedures. However, without the specific data it is not possible to analyze the cost/benefit impact and therefore **CBIA does not believe there is enough information to make a decision on SB 5, SB 7 or SB 15** and therefore urges you not to act on these mandates at this time.

Specifically on SB 5, which deals with telemedicine services, CBIA believes that telemedicine may have a cost saving role in healthcare. However, placing additional restrictions on the utilization of telemedicine so early in its development will hamstring its potential.

In regard to SB 7, without additional data it is difficult to determine how this bill will impact cost and quality and therefore it would be prudent wait to act on it until such data can be analyzed.

Connecticut employers are concerned with Connecticut's high number of existing health benefit mandates because in the aggregate they restrict choice and increase price. And, without data to show the long term cost/benefit of a particular service/procedure it is not possible to determine if the benefit will outweigh the increased cost. It is important to remember Connecticut already has many more mandates than other states nationally and even in New England so these proposals are adding to an existing issue.²

¹ See 2014 Survey of Connecticut Businesses, page 5: http://www5.cbiam.com/newsroom/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/BlumShapiro_14.pdf

² See CBIA's Legislative Agenda: <http://gov.cbiam.com/agenda/healthcare1>

New Mandates = Higher Cost for Small Employers

New health benefit mandates directly impact small employers because these mandates only apply to companies that fully insure. Typically smaller employers fully insure because they cannot afford to self-insure. Larger companies that are able to self-insure are exempt from state requirements and instead subject to federal rules. We must work together to ensure health insurance is affordable for all of Connecticut's residents and CBIA is especially concerned about Connecticut's small employers.

Cost to the State

The Essential Health Benefit package – required by federal healthcare legislation – is already set and includes all of the state's existing health benefit mandates. However, this package cannot be changed until 2016 and the state is required to pay for any mandates not included in the existing package. So, if new mandates are adopted the state must pick up the bill for certain individuals who utilize those new mandates.

While everyone can certainly agree not all new mandates are cost prohibitive we must also be prudent in adopting new measures and be sure we have all the data to substantively analyze new measures. Without the specific data to analyze these new benefits CBIA urges the Committee to reject SB 5, SB 7, and SB 15 at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer CBIA's comments.