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**Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony on**  
**Senate Bill 21 An Act Concerning Insurance Coverage of Abuse Deterrent Opioid**  
**Analgesics and House Bill 5259 An Act Expanding Health Insurance Coverage For the**  
**Treatment of Mental or Nervous Disorders**  
**Submitted to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee**  
**February 5, 2015**

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today on Senate Bill 21 An Act Concerning the Insurance Coverage of Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Analgesics and House Bill 5259 An Act Expanding Health Insurance Coverage for the Treatment of Mental or Nervous Disorders. Both bills seek to address issues related to conditions often for which a stigma exists; substance abuse and mental or nervous disorders. CSMS has consistently argued for parity in coverage for these diseases and feel that acceptable coverage by insurers can assist in removing the stigma.

First, CSMS supports Senate Bill 21 as it provides an option for physicians and patients in situations where there is a high risk of abuse, without any increase in costs. Since the availability of abuse-deterrent opioid analgesics can reduce abuse rates, such prescriptions should be included in insurance coverage. However, while we support Senate Bill 21, the lack of ability to crush or liquefy a drug for abuse, does not mean the drug will not be abused. Technological advancements in the production of abuse-deterrent opioid analgesics are critical and important in increasing the difficulty for abuse, particularly when obtained by those for whom the prescription is not intended. However, the technology must match the route of abuse. For that reason, parity in coverage for a full range of substance use disorder treatment and prevention is equally, if not more important. This would also include overdose prevention efforts such as coverage for, and the wide spread availability of opioid antagonists such as Naloxone.

Similar to the stigma that exists for substance abuse disorders, so it does for mental and nervous disorders. We support the intent of House Bill 5259 to increase coverage for such services. These diseases are often significant and devastating and should be afforded parity in coverage for all diseases that can potentially destroy lives. CSMS offers our resources to work with members of the committee to develop comprehensive legislation to provide parity in coverage for substance abuse disorders as well and mental and nervous disorders.

Please support SB 21 and HB 5259.