



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee

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Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA
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Senate Bill 814 - An Act Promoting Accountable Care Collaboratives

The Department of Public Health (DPH) offers the following comments on Senate Bill 814. The bill mandates that the department establish a program to promote and regulate Accountable Care Collaboratives (ACCs). An ACC is a group of clinically integrated health care providers that work together to provide, manage and coordinate care for a defined group of patients and share accountability for the quality and cost of such care. The bill also requires the department to adopt regulations establishing criteria for certificates of authority, quality standards, reporting requirements, other necessary requirements; and issue certificates of authority to ACCs that meet the commissioner's requirements.

As proposed, the bill presents several challenges to the department.

First, the bill uses the term "certificates of authority"; however, it is unclear what that term is being used to describe. Assuming that the term is referring to a certificate of need (CON), the Department of Public Health's Office Health Care Access (OHCA) is responsible for issuing certificates of need. Currently, OHCA only regulates health care facilities. An ACC does not meet the definition of a health care facility, as set forth within section 19a-630 of the general statutes. Therefore, OHCA does not collect or have access to information pertaining to ACCs. Consequently, OHCA will be unable to verify information submitted by an ACC in a certificate of need application. Moreover, the collection of data and review of CON applications pertaining to ACCs would require additional staffing for OHCA.

Second, the Department's Healthcare Quality and Safety Branch licenses healthcare facilities and healthcare practitioners, utilizing quality and safety standards. Healthcare facilities and practitioners appear to be integral parts of ACCs. However, the Department is uncertain about the utility of further regulation of these entities, outside of their business operations. Moreover, the Department of Public Health lacks expertise in the business and financing aspects of healthcare providers, including rate negotiation. Other state agencies may possess such expertise and jurisdiction and may be better suited to this particular task.

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Consequently, additional resources, including but not limited to, establishing a new unit within OHCA would be needed to implement the requirements of the bill. The Department is not supportive of the bill at this time.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.