



Quality is Our Bottom Line

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Insurance Committee Public Hearing

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Connecticut Association of Health Plans

Testimony Submitted regarding

HB 6847 AA Enhancing Access to Behavioral Health Services and Services for Youths with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Connecticut Association of Health Plans applauds the Governor's work in the area of autism advocacy and we welcome the opportunity to work with the Governor's office and other interested parties on ways to address appropriate coverage for persons with autism spectrum disorder. As we understand the bill, it expands the current autism mandate to individual health plans consistent with federal parity laws, it raises the age threshold from 15 to 21 and it requires that the Commissioner of Developmental Services, in consultation with the Autism Spectrum Advisory Council, designate services and interventions that demonstrate empirical effectiveness for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder.

The Association looks forward to a continued conversation on these, and other, issues including the appropriateness of various therapeutic treatments as well as what are, and what should be, the pertinent licensing and credentialing standards. The Commissioner's expertise on these matters will be welcome and we look forward to partnering with her on her mandate to designate specific interventions and to identify best practices.

With respect to Section 7 which requires the Insurance Commissioner to convene a working group to "develop recommendations for behavioral health utilization and quality measures data that should be collected uniformly" from health care entities that pay claims, the Association supports this measure. There is an immense desire among policy leaders for data in the area of mental health and substance abuse and while we appreciate the intent of various proposals, they often pull the industry in a multitude of directions. From individual study requests to what will be required under the state's All Payer Claims Database (APCD), we believe there is great merit in developing one set of recommendations with the appropriate parties that fully understand both the ability and limitation of data to paint an accurate picture and who understand what's already been enacted and is being implemented.