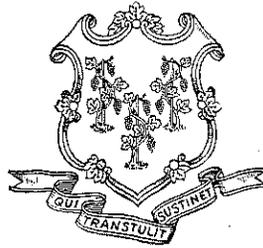


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Environment Committee

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Internship Committee

Member
Public Health Committee
Transportation Committee

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Senator Ted Kennedy Jr.

March 11, 2015

In support of:

S.B. 687 An Act Concerning Notice to Patients of Costs for Routine Health Services

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee: thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on **Senate Bill 687, "An Act Concerning Notice to Patients of Costs for Routine Health Services."** As State Senator from Connecticut's 12th Senate District, it is my pleasure to offer my support for this critical legislation.

As our citizens are aware, managing personal health care expenses can be a complicated and frustrating experience. The process for determining standard prices for routine care frequently lacks clarity, and the calculation of an individual's deductible or copay expenses has long been a significant source of confusion for many residents. In addition, many policyholders in our state have faced unexpected insurance cost increases that can create severe financial hardships for taxpayers and working families. This lack of transparency and clarity from health care providers serves only to unduly burden those citizens that can least afford such unanticipated expenses – particularly when such expenses are critical to the decisions we make regarding our health.

SB 687 is a long overdue step towards ensuring that patients can make these decisions in a far more informed fashion by requiring health care providers to provide standard cost and payment information to policyholders for appointments, tests and procedures. By having greater access to this data, patients will better be able to manage their health care expenses, determine costs for basic care and create an accurate family budget. And by providing a clearer picture of the rates offered by providers, our residents will have much needed elements of consumer protection and transparency as safeguards against rising costs or unforeseen health expenses. With health care remaining an increasingly difficult universe to navigate, our state can only benefit by making sure that patients have the tools they need to assess their health care needs.

As public servants, we should do everything in our power to provide our citizens with the resources necessary to make educated decisions about their health care, as well as ensure that providers are providing information to their patients in the most transparent manner possible.

Last year, the General Assembly took important steps towards providing greater clarity and certainty to Connecticut electricity market by requiring electric suppliers to inform consumers prior to rate increases. Today, we have an opportunity to take another step towards giving our residents the transparency they deserve in another critical area of their lives. In that spirit, I am proud to support **SB 687** and encourage the Public Health Committee to approve this legislation for consideration by the entire General Assembly.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on **SB 687**, and I look forward to working with the Committee's members and industry stakeholders to help craft the most effective legislation possible on behalf of our fellow citizens. If you have any questions regarding my testimony please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Ted Kennedy Jr.

Ted Kennedy Jr.
Connecticut State Senator, 12th District