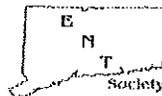
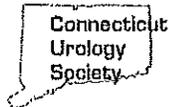
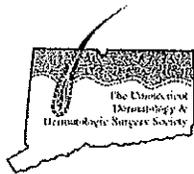




127 Washington Avenue, East Building, 3rd Floor, North Haven, CT 06473
Phone (203) 865-0587 Fax (203) 865-4997 www.csms.org



**Testimony on Senate Bill 69
An Act Exempting Veterinarians from the Electronic Prescription Drug Monitoring System.
Public Health Committee
February 16, 2016**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) and the specialty organizations listed above, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today on **Senate Bill 69 An Act Exempting Veterinarians from the Electronic Prescription Drug Monitoring System**. This legislation would exempt Veterinarians from participating in the electronic prescription monitoring system that requires all other prescribers of controlled substances to register and use the system. The system was designed and implemented to assist prescribers in identifying and preventing the improper or illegal use of controlled substances.

CSMS recognizes and understands the enormous burden of time, energy and hours of work that participating in the Electronic Prescription Drug Monitoring System (EPDMS) entails. Further, we recognize that animals, whether they are pets or farm animals, rarely if ever become abusers of legitimate or illicit drugs. However, these drugs have the potential for diversion to human use. A significant part of the opioid problem involves the process of doctor shopping and the use of multiple prescribers to obtain the desired product needed to satisfy addicted patients. Addiction can cause the addict to seek creative ways to obtain illicit drugs to feed the disease. They will seek the means to fulfill the addiction from any source necessary. Currently, there is nothing stopping an addicted human from shopping veterinarian practices with a limping animal in the effort to obtain opioid pain medicines except the EPDMS. Likewise, recent studies have shown that a very high percent of adolescents addicted to illicit opioids got their start with prescription pain medications used for the management of pain in acute situations. This age group has been shown to be unusually vulnerable to all addictive substances including alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. Placing strong opioid pain medicines intended for pets in the home increases the likelihood of adolescent exposure, addiction and the potential for fatal overdoses. Requiring veterinarians to use the EPDMS can be cumbersome, as it is for all other health care providers with prescriptive authority, but it is necessary if we are to fight the war on opioid abuse on all fronts.

Over the past several years, the state and many professional organizations like ours have been working hard and struggling to fight the abuse of controlled substances and address the dire addiction crisis gripping our state. With significant changes to the EDMS recently being made by the legislature during last year's session, now is not the time to exempt a necessary prescribing base from reporting to and using the system.

Please oppose SB 69