

Testimony in Support of Raised S.B. No. 130 for Hearing of the Joint Committee on Public Health, 02/24/2016

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AN ACT CONCERNING PATIENT INFORMATION AND THE ALL-PAYER CLAIMS DATABASE.

To allow patients the option of having data relating to health care services they receive excluded from the all-payer claims database.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Raised Senate Bill No. 130. I offer it in memory of my mother, Catherine Cavanagh, February 22, 1922-May 23, 2012.

This bill requires the “development and implementation” of a “form to allow individuals receiving health care services to exclude data relating to such services from the information a reporting agency reports to the All-Payer Claims Database.”

Whatever the intent of the All-Payer Claims Database, in practice it is duplicitous and coercive without at least the caveat offered by this bill, the right of patients to opt out if they choose and their right to be fully informed about that option.

I start from the premise that health care is a fundamental human right. It is not a privilege to be doled out according to who can afford to pay for what or whose medical needs are deemed worthy of attention. No one should be denied or limited care that they choose based upon age, income, mental or physical capacity, the quality of their health insurance policy or their lack thereof, pre-existing condition or any other factor. (Shorten that sentence to “No one should be denied or limited the health care that they need and choose for any reason.”)

A corollary to this premise is that all patients should be able to trust their health care providers implicitly as well as to be served by a health care system that places every patient’s welfare and well-being at the forefront. All patients - all of us - should be clearly informed of our care options as well as the use that will be made of any information - either individually or in aggregate - about us given to our providers or our insurers.

Our current system of health care continues to move further and further away from upholding these fundamental rights, even as we hear talk from all sides about the need for sweeping change. (The change may indeed be sweeping, but it is not in a good direction.) The system has become an increasingly adversarial one, with patients and their advocates having to fight for their rights - **even fight to know what those rights are** - at the most vulnerable times of their lives.

This bill takes a small step in a better direction by providing patients with one tool for information and choice. I urge you to bring it to the floor with your support.

