



Community Health Center Association of Connecticut

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Testimony of

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Commenting on

*House Bill 7008: An Act Concerning a Medicaid-Funded Pilot Program
for Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives*

Human Services Committee

February 7, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 7008, *An Act Concerning a Medicaid-Funded Pilot Program for Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives*.

On behalf of sixteen of Connecticut's federally-qualified health centers (FQHCs), which serve over 350,000 patients each year, I thank the Committee for raising this bill and offer a few comments for context.

As the Committee may know, long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) are highly effective at preventing pregnancy, are easy to use and have few counter indications. National studies indicate that they are particularly beneficial for low-income women with multiple social barriers. In recognition, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) is working to identify strategies to improve access to these devices. One of the identified approaches is to encourage federally-qualified health centers (FQHCs) to provide LARCs.

Here in Connecticut, FQHCs are not reimbursed for the cost of LARCs for their HUSKY patients. The State Department of Social Services has determined that the devices are part of operating costs, akin to boxes of gloves or bandages. As LARCs cost in the \$300 range, this lack of reimbursement serves as a barrier to FQHCs providing LARCs to their patients. Instead, patients who are interested in utilizing this form of contraception are referred to other facilities, which impedes continuity of care and integration.

CHCACT is working with DPH and others to establish professional development opportunities for FQHC providers around LARC. I encourage the Committee to work with stakeholders to improve the availability of this contraception option for all women in Connecticut, whether through a pilot program, a public-private partnership or an administrative policy change.

Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of our great state.