Bill No.: SB-31
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING SURPRISE MEDICAL BILLS FOR LABORATORY SERVICES.
Vote Date: 3/14/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 2/7/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:
This bill expands the definition of “surprise bill” by protecting the patient from paying out-of-network laboratory costs that they are not aware of. It requires the patient to only pay in-network costs and the lab to accept the in-network payment.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
Ted Doolittle, Office of the Healthcare Advocate supports this bill because it closes the loophole of patients paying out-of-network lab costs. There are instances where an in-network provider recommends a lab test and the specimen is sent to an out-of-network lab, without the patient’s knowledge. This bill will enhance consumer protections for patients who believed the specimen would be sent to an in-network lab, by paying in-network lab costs.

State of Connecticut Insurance Department states that they cannot provide substantive comments on bills that are in the concept phase but will review bills when they are fully drafted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist., supports this bill because it strengthens protections from surprise billings included in PA 15-146. If a patient’s samples were sent to an out-of-network
lab, without the patient’s knowledge, they would be billed at the same cost as an in-network lab.

**Milton Armm M.D., CT Urology Society** states having helped the General Assembly work on SB 808, they carefully support this bill. They understand the need to include laboratory fees in the existing statute, but “caution the General Assembly not to alter the reimbursement mechanism this statute has established”. They suggest protocols for resolution of payment disputes that would strengthen the bill.

**Lisa Freeman, Executive Director, CT Center for Patient Safety** supports this bill because “certain lab tests must be performed by specific laboratories which may be out-of-network. These lab tests may be more expensive, but are necessary for the patient’s proper treatment and should be covered by insurance.”

**Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut** supports policies that push back rising health care costs for Connecticut residents.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**William G. Frederick, Ph.D., M.D., Connecticut Society of Pathologists** opposes the expansion of the definition of “surprise bill” to include non-emergency health care services rendered by out-of-network labs. They state that if a physician orders a test and a patient consent in writing it is not a surprise bill and should not be subjected to this law. The bill would have the “effect of denying patients access to specialized clinical laboratories…who may not accept payment at the median in-network rate.”

Reported by: Greg Castelli  Date: 3/25/19