

Insurance and Real Estate Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1008

AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH EQUITY, THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Title: AND PULSE OXIMETERS.

Vote Date: 3/22/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/9/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Patricia A. Dillon, 92nd Dist.

Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist.

Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.

Rep. Robyn A. Porter, 94th Dist.

Rep. Juan R. Candelaria, 95th Dist.

Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To address concerns regarding biases in the health care system specifically with pulse oximeters. The pulse oximeter has had a weakness of inaccurately identifying blood oxygen levels in people of color as opposed to white counterparts. The bill seeks to expand education to all those who use the pulse oximeter and consumers to make sure they are all informed of this disparity.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Patricia Dillon, Connecticut General Assembly supports the bill as it prohibits some insurers, providers and other entities from denying coverage for and a pulse oximeter. It also directs the insurance department to issue regulations to ensure providers and consumers are informed that a pulse oximeter is likely to produce and inaccurate blood

oxygen reading for an individual of color as opposed to a white individual. As of the pandemic data shows people of color are at higher risk of debility and death and wants to identify sources of bias in the help care system to correct them.

Connecticut Hospital Association agrees with the underlying principles of the bill but has concerns on the implementation. Due to the weaknesses of the device, such as inaccurate measures for those with darker skin tones it leads to unmitigated oxygen levels in persons of color. While this has been known for many years it has been more evident from the pandemic. The CHA suggested that the bill include oversight roles for the departments of consumer protection and that the plan for educating patients does not stop at "insured" patients.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Christina Cruz

Date: 04/01/2021