

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-367

AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY TO MAXIMIZE MEDICAID

Title: REIMBURSEMENT FOR UCONN HEALTH CENTER.

Vote Date: 3/19/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/12/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The University of Connecticut Health Center (UConn Health) is one of the major safety-net care facilities in Connecticut, providing inpatient and outpatient services for under-served populations at levels not supported by most other private entities. The facility also generates \$3.3 billion in overall economic benefit to the state and contributes over 13,000 jobs in the state economy. For the past several years, inadequate Medicaid reimbursement programs have caused the facility to lose roughly \$104M each year. This bill would establish a task force to study the maximization of Medicaid reimbursement for the University of Connecticut Health Center. The lack of funding for reimbursement has hindered the ability of UConn Health to meet demands for care for underinsured and uninsured patients.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Social Services (DSS), Commissioner, Andrea Barton Reeves; neither supports nor opposes stating that the Office of the Governor, Office of Policy and Management, and UConn Health are currently working with a consultant to study the role that UConn Health plays in the healthcare field in Connecticut. It is stated that, until that study is concluded, timeframes for the task force as outlined in this bill may be somewhat premature.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

University of Connecticut Health Center; supports this bill stating that with the current under-reimbursement nature of the safety-net care it provides, the UConn Health clinical operation loses \$104M each year. Additionally, it is stated that one in four UConn Health Patients are Medicaid recipients. It is stated that the establishment of a task force to study

Medicaid reimbursement will provide an immediate and direct benefit to UConn Health and its patients.

AFSCME Council 4, Legislative Director, Zak Leavy; supports this bill stating that investments in UConn Health benefit underserved communities and ensure they get the care they need. It is stated that maximizing Medicaid reimbursements will bring in the necessary revenue for UConn Health Center to continue providing services.

American Association of University Professors, Vice President of UConn Health Chapter, Ion Moraru; supports this bill stating that state support for UConn Health is not a subsidy for a business but rather an investment in public health for Connecticut residents. It is stated that the UConn John Dempsey Hospital is the only hospital in the state with exceptional safety ratings on Healthgrade and Leapfrog largely due to state-funded infrastructure investment.

Health Equity Solutions, Community Engagement Manager, Tonya Bradley & Director of Policy, Katherine Villeda; support this bill stating that UConn Health is the single largest provider of dental services to patients enrolled in Medicaid as well as underinsured and uninsured people in the state. It is stated that the UConn Health Center has faced budget deficiencies over the last several years. It is stated that the maximization of Medicaid reimbursements would allow UConn Health to continue to provide the services it offers and improve the quality of care for patients.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Jaclyn Rauch

Date: March 25, 2024