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**CSMS Comments Regarding Health Care Cabinet Recommendations
Preliminarily Approved November 1, 2016**

**Submitted to the Health Care Cabinet
November 15, 2016**

Lieutenant Governor Wyman and members of the Governor's Health Care Cabinet, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), please accept these comments regarding the Health Care Cabinet recommendations preliminarily approved on November 1, 2016. We want to thank Marge Houy and Megan Burns for the opportunity to meet on November 7 to discuss in detail the comments contained in this testimony with the participation of Vicki Veltri, JD, LLM. During that meeting we were able to discuss the following concerns and provide suggestions for corrections.

First, and most importantly, outside of our specific recommendations we must stress the overarching concerns physicians have on behalf of their patients. While former CSMS President William Handelman, MD is a formal voting member of the Cabinet and has been present at all discussions, unfortunately such a herculean task as this requires more input than that of one token physician. It is imperative for there to be coalition/consensus building through strong, trusted leadership by all stakeholders. Many physicians who have reviewed the recommendations have pointed to a deficit in this regard. Trust must be the foundation of all activities of this august body. We believe this sentiment is directly related to the lack of involvement and input from physicians and other healthcare professionals in the process and the discussion. That lack of input from practicing physicians can be directly attributed to the issues we raise.

Our suggestions are as follows:

- The cabinet and its consultants have reviewed and relied on information regarding initiatives in other states regarding health care reform. Focus should be on what is, or is not, working in the state of Connecticut.
- Recommendations fail to address how state efforts will or will not tie in to the efforts of other states.
- As all states struggle with reforming local systems of health care, there is also the fact that many changes are being implemented at the federal level that would significantly impact many reforms implemented in Connecticut.
- The recommendations do not speak to the impact on our health insurance exchange, Access Health CT, or the incredibly important All Payer Claims Database (APCD). The question remains as to whether that should fall under the state, or remain a quasi-governmental agency as it relates to private data of our patients.
- CSMS has continued to raise concerns with multiple entities dealing with systemic reform, such as the Medical Assistance Program Oversight Committee (MAPOC) as well as the State

- Innovation Model (SIM), regarding risk and risk assumption that could drive independent physicians out of business or in to other modes of practice.
- Should such a transformation occur, it would raise the need for recommendations to address workforce shortage issues by including a focused discussion of items that will attract and retain physicians.
 - Significant resources should be afforded to assist young physicians through such barriers to practice and look at loan forgiveness and forbearance.
 - The affordability of medical liability insurance, and the difficulties of the current liability system and its impact on the cost and quality of care must be addressed.
- It must be ensured that any discussions or recommendations on price or cost controls do not limit care delivery for patients or decrease already poor access to specialists.
- Medical necessity, not cost, should dictate the provision of care.

For many of these reasons, we do support the establishment of a state agency or office to coordinate these efforts. The establishment of such an office could and should assist in efforts to increase the ability of physicians to communicate and negotiate on quality, cost, and payment issues that can be accomplished usage of federal anti-trust laws such as the state action doctrine.

CSMS pledges to continue to work with the Cabinet and its consultants in an effort to present the strongest recommendations possible. We stand ready for more lengthy discussions and debates on these recommendations and how best to transition the health care delivery system in Connecticut and the manner in which it is paid. Again, trust is critical and CSMS is a trusted voice of physicians.