



*Testimony before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Commissioner Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH
March 1, 2022*

Good Morning Senator Lesser, Representative Wood and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. My name is Deidre S. Gifford, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS).

S.B. 15 - AN ACT ENCOURAGING PRIMARY AND PREVENTIVE CARE.

I am pleased to testify in support of section 3 of Governor’s Bill 15.

Improving Connecticut Medical Assistance Program (CMAP) members’ access to primary care has been a top priority for DSS. This bill further expands on our commitment to primary care. Specifically, section 3 of this bill would require DSS to put the name and contact information of each CMAP member’s primary care provider (PCP) on the applicable CMAP card. Leveraging our current person-centered approach to monitoring our members’ connections to their PCPs, DSS would identify the PCP to put on the card based either on the member’s election or based on the member’s visits to PCPs that were billed to CMAP. If DSS does not have such information for a member (including for members new to CMAP), the bill would require DSS to include a note on the card to contact CMAP for assistance in finding and contacting a PCP.

This bill builds on our existing initiatives to improve primary care for HUSKY Health. DSS pays higher Medicaid rates for primary care providers (PCPs) to encourage them to enroll as HUSKY Health providers and there is a robust network of enrolled PCPs. In partnership with our contracted medical administrative services organization (ASO), DSS actively monitors HUSKY Health members who are connected to a PCP enrolled in HUSKY Health and attributes members to PCPs based on their visits to PCPs. Through DSS’ person-centered medical home (PCMH) and PCMH+ programs, qualified PCPs receive additional enhanced payments for improved primary care services and care coordination to connect members with other needed services.

This bill would further encourage members to connect with their PCP on a regular basis and complements our existing efforts to promote primary care. In sum, DSS supports this bill and appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed bill.

H.B. No. 5042 - AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH CARE COST GROWTH.

The Department of Social Services supports H.B. No. 5042, An Act Concerning Health Care Cost Growth. Governor Lamont’s proposal would provide the Office of Health Strategy (OHS)

the authority needed to improve the transparency of information required to control the cost of health care expenditures and to improve the quality of care provided in the state. By increasing the transparency of data on insurance spending for both public and private insurers, this legislation would allow the state to craft tailored initiatives aimed at reducing health care costs for consumers. At the same time, the legislation authorizes a process of setting quality benchmarks to ensure a simultaneous focus on health care quality and outcomes in addition to costs.

This bill parallels the Governor's directive to the Department of Social Services, set forth in Executive Order 6. The Department is fully committed to collaborating with OHS to provide the necessary data for this effort. The most effective health care cost and quality reform efforts are those that include both public and private payers so that providers are participating in consistent strategies to improve care across all sectors.

The result of these combined efforts should lead to better health and fiscal outcomes for the state's residents and businesses. We urge the committee's support.