

**Testimony Supporting
H.B. 5038: An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations concerning an
All-Payer Claims Database Program**

Sharon D. Langer
Public Health Committee
March 7, 2012

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and Members of the Committee:

I am a Senior Policy Fellow with Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

On behalf of Connecticut Voices, I am here to testify in **support** of House Bill 5038 which would implement an All-Payer Claims Database Program (APCDP). This proposal offers an important opportunity for the state to collect from all payers of health care in Connecticut data that will allow stakeholders, including state agencies, the Health Insurance Exchange, insurers and consumers to understand the financing of insurance coverage and where those public and private dollars are being spent in the entire health care system. Armed with this data, the state will be in a better position to improve access and quality of care, as well as create incentives to drive down costs and improve overall health of the entire population of the state.

Connecticut Voices for Children brings a unique perspective in support of this endeavor. Since 1995, the Connecticut General Assembly has appropriated funds for independent performance monitoring in the HUSKY Program as a means of ensuring that tax dollars are spent wisely. Through this monitoring, Connecticut can track enrollment trends and the health care that children and families actually receive, including well-child care, dental care, emergency care, prenatal care, and other services.¹ The State contracts with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and in turn the Foundation funds the project via a grant to Connecticut Voices for Children. For the past 16 years, Mary Alice Lee, Ph.D., has directed the monitoring project, first at the Children's Health Council, and now at Connecticut Voices. In order for Dr. Lee to conduct the monitoring, Connecticut Voices for Children has had access to enrollment and claims data for the HUSKY program (Medicaid and more recently the Children's Health Insurance Program).

Connecticut Voices has been able to accomplish the analysis and monitoring of this dataset of individual health-related encounter and enrollment information in full compliance with all state and federal privacy laws and regulations and any restrictions related to the use of Medicaid data. At the same time, we have been able to produce reports that shine a light on, for example, whether and to what extent children are receiving preventive care, regular check-ups and any needed treatment. We have been able to monitor access to and utilization of oral health care services, the extent to which pregnant women are using tobacco, and the systemic challenges of providing coverage to different age groups, such as babies and older youth. Moreover, our reports provide data broken out by age, gender, race and ethnicity, and geographical area, so that special factors that may be related to these demographic characteristics can be understood and addressed.

Furthermore, Dr. Lee has been able to link birth data (housed at the state Department of Public Health) with Medicaid data (under the purview of the Department of Social Services) in order to

report on births to mothers in Medicaid and HUSKY. This linked dataset provides the only reliable method of determining which mothers and newborns received care funded by the State of Connecticut. It is the only source of information on maternal health and births to mothers with publicly funded coverage by age, race or ethnicity, and other factors that can affect or contribute to birth outcomes.² This kind of linkage and analysis of discrete datasets on a larger scale would be made possible by the creation of an all-payer claims data base. It would yield critically important statewide and population-wide information that is now unavailable for the state's non-Medicaid health care system.

In sum, we at Connecticut Voices wholeheartedly endorse the creation of an all-payer claims data base in compliance with relevant state and federal privacy protections. We fully support the goals of the APCDP Workgroup to use the data collected to improve health outcomes of all Connecticut residents, improve the understanding of health care expenditures in the private and public sectors, and increase efficiency in the delivery of health care in the state. We believe that a system can be designed that protects the privacy of patients and allows the public and policymakers to understand where our health care dollars are being spent, on what services those health care dollars are spent, and how to improve access to and the quality of health care for all our residents.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 5038. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

¹ See for example, Lee, Mary Alice, Connecticut Voices for Children. *Children's Dental Services in the HUSKY Program: Program Improvements Led to Increased Utilization in 2009 and 2010* (Dec. 2011); *Births to Mothers with HUSKY Program and Medicaid Coverage: 2009* (Dec. 2011); *Trends in New Enrollment in the HUSKY Program* (Dec. 2011) available at www.ctkidslink.org/pub_issue_12.html.

² See, for example, Lee, Mary Alice, Connecticut Voices for Children. *Births to Mothers with HUSKY Program and Medicaid Coverage: 2009* (Dec. 2011); *Births to Mothers with HUSKY Program and Medicaid Coverage: 2008* (Dec. 2011), available at www.ctkidslink.org/pub_issue_12.html.