



UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE
FOUNDATION OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony Regarding
Senate Bill 813: An Act Concerning Health Care Price,
Cost and Quality Transparency &
Senate Bill 687: An Act Concerning Notice to Patients of Costs
for Routine Health Services
Submitted by Frances G. Padilla, President
Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut
March 11, 2015**

Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut (UHCF) is an independent, nonprofit foundation working to shape our state's health care system to provide quality, affordable care and promote good health for all state residents.

Both SB 813 and SB 687 address transparency to help consumers make informed decisions about their health care.

Consumers need access to quality, affordable care to maintain and improve their health. Yet there are limits to how much price and quality transparency can engage and empower consumers to better manage their health. We encourage you to read our colleague Francois de Brantes' testimony on SB 813, as he is a leading expert in the field of quality and affordable health care in the United States.

Most health care decisions are not "shoppable". This may be because of their urgent nature or the lack of competition or choices available in a given payer network. In addition, weighing cost and quality information may be complex. The quality information available may not be particularly relevant to the specific problem or procedure the consumer is considering. Consumers may face barriers with appointment availability or transportation to the provider's location. Finally, access to technology, health literacy and other skills are needed to properly ensure that price, cost and quality transparency is truly beneficial to consumers and patients.

There is some benefit in making this information available to hold health care providers and hospital systems accountable for the care they deliver. We do not oppose the principles behind these bills—but transparency aimed at changing individual health care decisions alone does not ensure a better experience for the consumer, or better health outcomes. It is only one piece of a much larger health care system puzzle.

Connecticut faces numerous challenges as it strives to address the need for access to high-quality, affordable health care that improves health for all state residents. The bills you are hearing today address many current challenges, but they are either short-term responses or do not coordinate and leverage existing efforts and investments to help us achieve long-term, sustainable solutions. Even worse, some bills may create unintended consequences.

I urge you to watch Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut's short video testimony and check out our complete written testimony and supporting resources on the web at: bit.ly/uahcf-legislative

We can learn much from other states, such as Massachusetts, Vermont, Oregon and Washington—all of which have an "authority" of some sort that brings together health care planning and policymaking to best serve the health care interests of each state. These states are trying to look at the whole picture. We do not have a coordinated, cohesive approach in Connecticut and it is to the detriment of the families, businesses, communities and taxpayers of this state.

What we really need is an omnibus bill that incorporates components of this bill, Senate Bills 810, 811, 812, 814, 815, and 916 as well as House Bill 6938—and possibly more ideas. We ask legislative leaders to work to craft a bill with input from stakeholders including consumers, providers and payers. We believe that such a bill can build on positive current work being done in Connecticut and help realize visionary, strategic and sustainable solutions to our shared health care challenges.