



UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE
FOUNDATION OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony in Opposition to
House Bill 5202: An Act Prohibiting Pharmacists From Making Changes To Prescriptions Without
Prescriber Consent**

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Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut opposes House Bill 5202, An Act Prohibiting Pharmacists From Making Changes To Prescriptions Without Prescriber Consent.

We encourage you to review and consider Dr. Stephen Smith's testimony on this bill, as he is a practicing physician and his testimony includes the medical knowledge and the many years of experience he brings to this issue.

First, we are not encouraging pharmacists to diagnose or disregard a prescriber's order. What we do think is worth pursuing, and which would be restricted by this bill's intent, is therapeutic substitution. It could also restrict the existing policy of generic substitution.

Some insurance companies utilize therapeutic substitution and step therapy to discourage the use of certain drugs in the same class – this is not what we are advocating for. We are advocating for a consumer to have a choice, with the help of a pharmacist, to choose a lower priced medication, if the physician has indicated that the drug can be substituted when prescribing.

We know that prescription drug costs are a challenge for payers and consumers – this measure is not a silver bullet for pharmacy costs. But it is one way we can address consumer burden and protect consumer pocketbooks by ensuring that when a cheaper, equally effective option is available, the consumer can access it.

Also, as Dr. Smith points out in his testimony, this bill threatens the existing policy of generic substitution, where a pharmacist could substitute a less expensive generic version of the prescribed drug. Again, if, for whatever reason, a physician does not want the patient to substitute the drug with the generic, he or she need only indicate that on the prescription. But if a specific drug is either not on the patient's drug formulary, or is on the formulary at a high cost-sharing rate, the consumer should have the choice to have the pharmacist substitute the less expensive, generic version of the drug.

There is no one easy solution for making health care more affordable. There are many players, many stakeholders, and many factors affecting our health. Affordable health care requires a coordinated approach with interconnected measures. This is one such measure, reducing the consumer's out-of-pocket costs at the pharmacy when a reasonable option is available.

We have to remember that health care affordability isn't just about lowering costs in the larger system – it's also about consumers getting the high-quality health care they need, at a price they can afford.

Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut's mission is to serve as a catalyst that engages residents and communities in shaping a democratic health system that provides universal access to quality, affordable health care and promotes health in Connecticut. We believe that health care is a fundamental right and that our work is part of a broader movement for social and economic justice.

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