



November 25, 2008

Social Services Commissioner Michael Starkowski today hosted a productive and positive meeting to discuss forward progress of the Charter Oak and HUSKY programs with Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Senator Jonathan Harris, Representative Peter Villano, Healthcare Advocate Kevin Lembo, Child Advocate Jeanne Milstein, and several aides. Counsel Laura Jordan represented Representative Christopher Donovan. The meeting resulted from Governor M. Jodi Rell's Nov. 19 invitation to the parties concerned with HUSKY and Charter Oak.

Commissioner Starkowski reassured the group that Governor Rell's Nov. 14 directive to allow managed care organizations to enroll medical providers separately in the HUSKY and Charter Oak programs means the following:

- A health plan can enroll a medical provider in HUSKY without the requirement that it enroll same provider in Charter Oak, or vice versa.
- The health plans are still required, under their contracts, to enroll an adequate number of providers in their HUSKY and Charter Oak networks. This is because the health plans are contracted to administer benefits and customer service in both programs. However, the health plans have the freedom to seek enrollment of a specific provider in either HUSKY or Charter Oak, or both. Correspondingly, providers can elect to join HUSKY, Charter Oak, or both.

The Commissioner reiterated that the state does not plan to re-bid the programs, as the state's procurement process resulted in contracts with three bidding insurers that are currently administering medical benefits and customer service, with full Freedom of Information Act compliance, for the HUSKY and Charter Oak programs.

- **Commissioner Michael P. Starkowski** said: "We welcome the public support of Attorney General Blumenthal, Senator Harris and Representative Villano as human service committee co-chairs, and State Advocates Jeanne Milstein and Kevin Lembo in encouraging more medical providers to enroll in the HUSKY and Charter Oak networks. During the 2007 session, the Governor and General Assembly passed unprecedented rate increases to help doctors and hospitals enroll in our public health programs – and to recognize their commitment over the years when rate increases were not available."
- **Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Child Advocate Jeanne Millstein and Healthcare Advocate Kevin P. Lembo** said: "We welcome and applaud the administration's clarifying finally and unequivocally that HUSKY and Charter Oak are delinked -- providers can participate in one or both without preconditions. The commissioner was unequivocal in stating that this major policy change would be consistently followed."

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“Eliminating these issues, which created doubt and misunderstanding, is a positive and constructive step that enables us to move forward. Both Charter Oak and HUSKY are needed and deserve to succeed. HUSKY is one of the most successful children’s insurance programs in the nation, and this action assures its continuing success.

“Charter Oak and HUSKY offer hundreds of thousands of uninsured Connecticut residents desperately needed coverage, and we are deeply committed to helping both grow and prosper. We encourage providers to join both programs, and, most important, offer their vital healthcare services to patients in these two very worthwhile programs. The administration has wisely changed course.”

- **Senator Jonathan A. Harris (D-West Hartford) and Representative Peter F. Villano (D-Hamden)**, the Co-Chairmen of the Human Services Committee, said: “We had a positive meeting today. We achieved today in our conversation with Commissioner Starkowski what we have been working toward achieving for several months. We had an open dialogue, and we received a clear statement from the commissioner that the HUSKY and Charter Oak health plans are de-linked. We continue to encourage health care providers to participate in the HUSKY and Charter Oak health plans, and we look forward to a continuing dialogue with DSS and the governor with the goal of making both HUSKY and Charter Oak the best that they can be.”