

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
February 25, 2008**

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**House Bill 5617 - An Act Delaying Implementation Of and Making Revisions To
The Charter Oak Health Plan**

The Department of Public Health opposes House Bill 5617

This Act seeks to delay the implementation of the Charter Oak Health Plan. The Charter Oak Health Plan is a practical plan that will increase access to health insurance coverage for Connecticut's uninsured residents who are ineligible for other publicly funded health insurance plans. A delay in the implementation of the Charter Oak plan equates to a delay in health insurance access for these state residents and places them at continued increased risk until such time as the plan is made available. Further delays in accessing health care coverage will force uninsured residents and their families to forgo health care or accumulate debt trying to pay out-of-pocket.

The Department of Social Services has issued a Request for Proposal that includes provision of the Charter Oak Plan, HUSKY A and HUSKY B. Section 1 part (e) of HB 5617 indicates a separation of the Charter Oak Plan from the Husky A and B ASOs. The Department of Public Health opposes not only the delay in implementation of the Charter Oak Plan, but also any potential delay in identifying MCOs for the HUSKY A and B plans that are to go into effect July 1, 2008. House bill 5617 would halt the progress the State has made to increase access to health insurance and force the process to start all over again. In the meantime, thousands of Connecticut residents would continue to be uninsured.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.