



For Immediate Release
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Office of the Healthcare Advocate Recovers \$1.5 Million for Healthcare Consumers in Second Quarter 2014

Victoria Veltri, State Healthcare Advocate, announced today that the Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA), the independent state agency that assists consumers with health plan issues, generated \$1.5 million in savings for Connecticut healthcare consumers in the second quarter of 2014. The \$1.5 million represents the costs of healthcare services, procedures and claims that would have been borne directly by consumers of healthcare, had the agency not intervened.

OHA's model includes direct intervention via advocacy with health plans on denials of coverage for medical necessity, experimental/investigational status, and non medical necessity issues such as unwarranted billing actions or coding errors and non covered services determinations. OHA works *solely* on health issues, and its consumer recovery total reflects savings from intervention in fully-insured and self-funded health plans.

The \$1.5 million savings total includes OHA's successful appeals of complex mental health treatment denials of medically necessary inpatient psychiatric care for adolescents and several complex medical cases.

Veltri noted that the savings total for the second quarter of 2014 remains high despite the dramatic increase in the number of cases in which OHA has providing education or counseling. In the second quarter of 2014, OHA opened **2245 cases, *the second highest number of opened cases in a single quarter since OHA began operations in 2001.*** OHA opened 2594 cases in the first quarter of 2014. The highest number of referrals to OHA is for enrollment and eligibility issues related to coverage and appeals for Access Health CT and Medicaid.

OHA also issued its [Report on Fiscal Year 2014 Activities](#) detailing the extensive work of the office beyond traditional case work, including publication of an OHA newsletter,

Veltri said, "More than ever, healthcare consumers, providers, businesses and legislators are turning to OHA for trusted and real time advocacy. In a time when healthcare is evolving, the demand for the kind of services we provide, which range from real time consumer education and assistance in selecting a plan to direct advocacy in the grievance and appeal processes, is increasing exponentially. **OHA's case volume is trending at double the volume of calendar year 2013.**"

“As our feedback survey results continue to show, our clients consistently praise the OHA staff for the expert and timely advocacy they provide.

“OHA will continue to play a key role in outreach, education and advocacy for new enrollees in healthcare coverage in addition to our continuing role in advocating for consumers in medical necessity and billing disputes.”

Consumers who need assistance can call 1-866-466-4446, or e-mail OHA at healthcare.advocate@ct.gov.

For general information, Veltri recommends that consumers visit OHA at www.ct.gov/oha, at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/State-of-Connecticut-Office-of-the-Healthcare-Advocate/301102456997?ref=hl> and on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/stateofctoha>.

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