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May 2, 2006

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## **PROPOSED FEDERAL LAW WILL HURT CT PATIENTS**

### ***Healthcare Advocate Considers Challenge***

Connecticut Healthcare Advocate Kevin Lembo will consult with the state Attorney General as he considers a challenge to federal legislation scheduled for a vote this week in the U.S. Senate.

U.S. Senate Bill 1955, sponsored by Senator Michael Enzi (R-Wyoming) and voted out of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, would undercut Connecticut law that provides specific protections to healthcare consumers. The bill sets up Benefit Choice Standards that would be determined by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

This would be a huge setback for Connecticut residents because state law currently requires insurance companies to provide a wide variety of basic coverage including: mental health treatment, certain dental care, cancer screenings and diabetes care. S. 1955 would put all these protections at risk.

“If this bill passes and is signed into law we intend to challenge it,” said Connecticut Healthcare Advocate Kevin Lembo. “The Connecticut Legislature, over a number of years, has thoughtfully written a number of common sense requirements into state law. These coverage requirements have saved consumers thousands of dollars and in some cases have probably saved lives. This federal legislation would turn back the clock on our progress in Connecticut and we are not going to stand by and let it happen.”

The bill also dangerously allows insurance companies to widely vary premiums to small businesses which could result in massive price increases of as much as 25%. The bill will create a two-tiered coverage system resulting in dramatically higher rates for businesses that employ older workers or those with preexisting medical conditions.



Insurance regulation has long been the province of the states. This bill, if it becomes law, would give the federal government unprecedented authority over decisions that should be properly made at the state level.

The most egregious portion of this legislation gives insurance companies the right to sue Connecticut, and other states, in federal court, a right consumers do not have. This is patently unfair and anti-consumer. In fact, this portion of S. 1955 makes clear that this is an insurance company protection bill.

Both Senators Chris Dodd and Joseph Lieberman oppose the bill. Lembo said he plans to continue to advocate for the defeat of the legislation with Connecticut's five congressmen. If the bill becomes law, Lembo, in consultation with Attorney General Blumenthal and the Insurance Department, will consider further action to overturn this unwarranted intrusion on state's rights.

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