Connecticut Commission on Women, Children *and* Seniors

CWCS

Testimony of
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Commission on Women, Children and Seniors
Submitted to the
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 22, 2017

Re: Raised Bill No. 810

Senators Larson and Kelly, Representative Scanlon, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors in support of **Raised Bill No. 810**.

As staff to the legislature, CWCS researches best practices, coordinates stakeholders, and promotes public policies that are in the best interest of Connecticut's underserved and underrepresented women, children and older adults. Affordable healthcare is certainly in the best interests of all our three demographics, and women have healthcare needs that are different from those of the general population.

Raised Bill No. 810 would prohibit insurers from imposing a co-payment or deductible on mammograms and breast ultrasounds, including those involving tomosynthesis. There are currently 1,463,000 women over the age of 18 in Connecticut, and 305,560 women age 65 and over – an age when women are at greater risk of developing breast cancer.[i]

Currently, about 1 in 8 women in the United States will develop invasive breast cancer over her lifetime.[ii] Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in American women of any race or ethnicity. Among Hispanic women, breast cancer is the most common cause of death by cancer; among all other races and ethnicities, breast cancer is the second most common cause of death by cancer.[iii] Regular screenings for breast cancer increase the likelihood of early detection, when treatment is easier.[iv]

The CWCS supports Raised Bill 810 because it would require insurance companies that currently cover the diagnostic tool known as digital tomosynthesis to continue to do so, without adding a co-pay to the insured person. Tomosynthesis creates a 3-dimensional image of the breast using x-rays by taking multiple photos that are then reconstructed into one image with computer software.

According to researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital, where the diagnostic tool was created,

"Conventional digital mammography produces one image of overlapping tissue, making it difficult to detect cancers. Performed with digital mammography using the same scanner, breast tomosynthesis takes multiple images of the entire breast. It allows…specialized breast radiologists to see through layers of tissue and examine areas of concern from all angles. Benefits can include:

- Earlier detection of small breast cancers that may be hidden during digital mammography
- Greater accuracy in pinpointing size, shape and location of abnormalities
- Fewer unnecessary biopsies or additional tests
- Greater likelihood of detecting multiple breast tumors, which occur in 15% of breast cancer patients
- Clearer images of dense breast tissue

We urge you to support making coverage for this lifesaving healthcare service more affordable – women's lives depend upon it.

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[i] U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
[ii] BreastCancer.org, U.S. Breast Cancer Statistics <http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/understand_bc/statistics>
[iii] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Breast Cancer Statistics <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/statistics/>
[iv] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, What Can I Do to Reduce My Risk for Breast Cancer? <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/prevention.htm>