



DATE: March 19, 2019
TO: Human Services Committee
FROM: Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, The Alliance
RE: H.B. No. 7339, An Act Concerning A Public Insurance Option

Good morning Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Logan, Representative Case and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide advocacy organization representing nonprofits, with a membership of more than 300 community organizations and associations. Nonprofits deliver essential services to more than half a million people each year and employ almost 14% of Connecticut's workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. No. 7339, An Act Concerning A Public Insurance Option. The proposed legislation seeks to create a working group to make recommendations concerning the establishment of a public health insurance coverage option due to the legislature by February 15, 2020.

The Alliance supports increasing access to affordable, high quality health care for more Connecticut residents. We ask that the workgroup to carefully consider the impact a new public health insurance option would have on the current Medicaid program.

Additionally, any new public health insurance option should ensure mental health parity. A 2017 Milliman report, "Addiction and Mental Health vs. Physical health: Analyzing Disparities in Network Use and Provider Reimbursement Rates," identified Connecticut as the state with the highest disparity between physical and behavioral healthcare in terms of the proportion of office visits that are out-of-network. Behavioral health needs are just as important as physical health needs and any public option plan should reflect this reality.

Finally, we respectfully request that a representative from the nonprofit health and human service provider network be included.

The Alliance stands ready to be a resource as the workgroup works toward increasing access to affordable, high quality health care for all of Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.