



UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE
FOUNDATION OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony Regarding
Senate Bill 809: An Act Concerning Facility Fees &
Senate Bill 993: An Act Concerning Facility Fees
Submitted by Lynne Ide, Director of Program & Policy
Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut
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Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut (UHCF) is an independent, nonprofit foundation working to shape our state's health care system to provide quality, affordable care and promote good health for all state residents.

We believe that facility fees are a symptom of a health care system gone awry. As we heard in testimony to the Bi-Partisan Roundtable on Hospitals and Healthcare, there is no systematic or consistent approach to setting facility fees across health systems.

The requirement of prominently displaying facility fee assessments (as SB 993 proposes) is too little, too late and does almost nothing to aid consumers. By the time they have arrived at their appointment and are reading the sign, they are unlikely to turn away from receiving care. The sign would also not be useful in helping them determine whether their insurance will cover the fee or they must pay for it themselves.

SB 809 is a more effective bill because it is an outright ban on certain facility fees, caps others, and requires insurers to pay for them.

However, we would prefer to see the elimination of the separate billing for facility fees. If they are truly the cost of doing business, these fees should simply be folded into the price the provider charges for the service. Independent providers always included administrative and overhead costs in one patient bill. Charging these costs to a separate bill that many insurers are refusing to pay has led to an unconscionable, unaffordable burden on patients, that belies the claim that consolidating medical practices into hospital systems produces cost savings.

Barring elimination of these separate fees, at least SB 809 provides stronger consumer protections. We caution, though, that these fees are too high, no matter if they are billed separately or together. They should not be passed on to consumers or employers, either in the form of higher premiums or higher out-of-pocket costs.

As we stated above, facility fees are a symptom of a broken health care system. At Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, we believe there is a better way to deliver high-quality, affordable health care that is accessible to all and improves the health of all state residents.

I urge you to watch Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut's short video testimony and check out our complete written testimony and supporting resources on the web at: bit.ly/uhef-legislative