



Testimony of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in opposition to LD 751 "An Act To Allow Employers To Shop for Competitive Health Plan Options"

May 3rd, 2021

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) submits the following testimony to the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services in opposition to LD 751 "An Act To Allow Employers To Shop for Competitive Health Plan Options". At LLS, our mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS exists to find cures and ensure access to treatments for blood cancer patients.

Our concerns with LD 751 are grounded in the fact that this bill could create a serious and unnecessary threat to patient privacy, opening the door to discrimination against individuals with pre-existing conditions in both their insurance plan designs and their workplaces. The amended version of this concept draft has only been available to stakeholders for a short window during the busiest period of an unusual legislative session. For this reason, and the concerns outlined here, we feel that if the committee wants to address the issues raised by the bill's sponsors and proponents, the bill should be carried over to allow stakeholders the full opportunity necessary to consider the significant changes proposed in the language.

For instance, the choice of whether or not to disclose a chronic illness to an employer must reside with the employee. There are myriad reasons an individual might choose not to voluntarily disclose a health condition. Whatever an individual's reasons may be, that choice, and the accompanying privacy of related health information, must be safeguarded. While the bill does include nominal measures to protect individual identity, the reality is that it would likely be a trivial matter for employers to identify individuals based on claims data presented in this fashion.

We also do not fully understand what problems the bill seeks to address. We have seen data from sources such as the Commonwealth Fund¹ that suggests that the burden of employee share of health insurance premiums stems from a complex mix of factors, including wage growth, that may not be fully addressed by this proposal.

We therefore urge the members of the Committee to vote **ought not to pass** on this bill, or carry this over to the next session for stakeholder input in the off-session.

If you have questions about LLS's position on this matter, or would like further information from LLS, please contact Steve at steve.butterfield@lls.org or 207-213-7254.

Sincerely,

Steve Butterfield
Regional Director, Government Affairs
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

¹ <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2020/nov/state-trends-employer-premiums-deductibles-2010-2019>