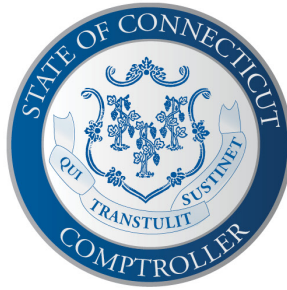


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**Written Testimony
Comptroller Kevin Lembo
March 3, 2020**

H.B. 5366: AN ACT CONCERNING THE COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

And

H.B. 5361: AN ACT LIMITING CHANGES TO PRESCRIPTION DRUG FORMULARIES AND LISTS OF COVERED DRUGS.

Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, and Representative Pavalock-D'Amato and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for House Bill 5366 An Act Concerning the Cost of Prescription Drugs and House Bill 5361 An Act Limiting Changes to Prescription Drug Formularies and Lists of Covered Drugs.

We are here today because one half of Connecticut's population is worried about affording their prescriptions. This fear of prescription costs spans across all insurance statuses – commercial, employer, Medicaid, Medicare, and no insurance. Connecticut residents have reported taking extreme measures because they struggle to afford their prescriptions. Fifteen percent did not refill a prescription, 13 percent cut pills in half or skipped a dose, and 20 percent did one or both of these.

Connecticut is one of the wealthiest states in the wealthiest country in the world! Our residents should not sacrifice their health because they cannot afford their medication and that is why I support H.B. 5366. The health of our residents must be a priority - and that means ensuring that monthly drug prices are manageable and predictable. Allowing anyone to be deprived access to life-saving medications due to cost does not align with Connecticut values.

H.B. 5366 seeks to expand access to affordable medication for Connecticut residents by attacking the problem on a number of fronts.

- It will establish a monthly pharmacy out-of-pocket spending cap of \$250 dollars, meaning those with chronic diseases will more easily be able to afford their medications. The reduced out of pocket costs will increase medication adherence and reduce ER visits and inpatient hospital stays that result when those with chronic diseases are unable to access the medications they need to manage their disease.
- It outlines procedures for the state to implement a Canadian drug Reimportation program, where the state will purchase drugs at wholesale prices from our Canadian neighbors. I believe that this legislation has established safe guidelines for this process that will ensure continued access to safe and high-quality drugs, but at a lower cost.
- It establishes a Critical Drug Shortage Review Board that will carefully study the cost of prescription drugs with the intention of identifying the ones that present a prescription drug emergency to the state and recommending federal action.

- It prevents changes to prescription drug formularies during the plan year, ensuring that plan participants that select a health plan based upon the preferred coverage status of a needed medication, continue to have access to such medication throughout the plan year. (H.B. 5366 & H.B. 5361)

This aggressive set of policies are a signal that the state is tired of the old way of doing things, and that we are ready for a change to keep Connecticut residents healthy.

I want to thank the chairs and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee for raising this policy package and for their leadership on these issues.