Spencer Coggs

State Senator

Senate Bill 80 – Volunteer Health Care Providers
Senator Spencer Coggs
Tuesday, August 18, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Members,

Thank you for holding this hearing on Senate Bill 80 regarding the Volunteer Health Care Provider Program.

Currently, doctors, dentists, dental hygienists, registered nurses, practical nurses, nurse practitioners, nurse-midwifes, optometrists, physicians assistants, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and dieticians are eligible to participate in the Volunteer Health Care Provider Program. What they do is work with a non-profit or elementary school to provide free or low cost health care to low income recipients. The state is required to provide legal representation and pay damages not covered by applicable insurance carriers in the event that a claim is successfully brought forth. Except that it only applies to a retired health care provider. The state does not offer coverage to active health care providers.

Senate Bill 80 would provide coverage of claims by the state to any and all health care providers who participate, obviously including active physicians. The bill would also extend participation in the program to chiropractors, physical therapists, and podiatrists. Podiatrists were added in the simple amendment to the bill that is before you.

The current set up puts active health care providers at a disadvantage by not providing protection for their actions as an "agent of the state" while volunteering. It is important to note that insurance companies often increase rates for active providers to a level that makes participation by anyone who isn't retired prohibitive.

These changes will result in little additional liability to the state as the program has had very few claims against a provider in its twenty year existence. Opening the program to active physicians will also encourage greater participation resulting in increased access to health care for low income residents of Wisconsin.

As Chairman of the Board for Milwaukee Health Services, Incorporated, a Federally Qualified Community Health Center, I know the value of access to health care for low income patients, and I know that this bill will increase that opportunity for care. I look forward to support of this proposal by the committee and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 • *Phone:* (608) 266-2500 • *Fax:* (608) 282-3546
Home Address: 7819 W. Potomac Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53222 • *Phone:* (414) 442-0739
***TOLL FREE:* 1-877-474-2000** • *E-Mail:* sen.coggs@legis.wisconsin.gov

State of Wisconsin
2009 - 2010 LEGISLATURE

LRBa0595/1
RLR:kjf:md

SENATE AMENDMENT , /

TO 2009 SENATE BILL 80

Coggs

1 At the locations indicated, amend the bill as follows:

2 **1.** Page 2, line 11: after "chiropractor under ch. 446," insert "a podiatrist under
3 subch. IV of ch. 448,".

4 **(END)**

State of Wisconsin
2009 - 2010 LEGISLATURE

LRBa0595/1
RLR:kjf:md

SENATE AMENDMENT , 1

TO 2009 SENATE BILL 80

Coggs

At the locations indicated, amend the bill as follows:

1. Page 2, line 11: after "chiropractor under ch. 446," insert "a podiatrist under subch. IV of ch. 448,".

(END)