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**Connecticut State Medical Society in support  
House Bill 7395 An Act Concerning Opioid Abuse and Treatment  
Presented to the Judiciary Committee  
April 3, 2019**

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and members of the Judiciary Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support **House Bill 7395 An Act Concerning Opioid Abuse and Treatment.**

As many on this committee know, CSMS has been at the forefront of efforts to fight the current crisis of addiction gripping our state and country. These efforts have ranged from reducing the number of opioids prescribed and educating physicians and other prescribers about the safe use of opioids and non-opioid pain treatment options, to expanding access to treatment programs including the use of Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) and increasing resource to fight the disease.

Unfortunately, many of those suffering from addiction enter the penal system for various reasons and spend time within the State's Department of Corrections. These sufferers are thrown into a situation in which there is little or no support or access to treatment, essentially forced to quit "cold turkey" despite the fact that many of these addicted inmates will qualify for Medicaid and addiction treatment programs under Medicaid once they are released. All too frequently the required waiting period for coverage results in recidivism and an eight to eleven times greater chance of dying from an overdose when they return to "use" at the same levels as prior to incarceration.

We can present facts and discuss the cost savings to the state and healthcare system through the passage of this bill. However, the underlying intent of this legislation is the humane treatment for all our citizens who suffer from an often-maligned disease. As we seek ways to expand access and options to fight opioid crisis, we cannot forget about a portion of the population for whom their disease in many instances has led to their current situation.

Please support HB 7395.