



January 28, 2020

Senator Cindy F. Friedman, Chair
Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
State House, Room 413-D
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Daniel R. Cullinane, Vice Chair
Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
State House, Room 236
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Friedman and Vice Chair Cullinane,

I am writing to submit testimony on behalf of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce on H.4134, *An Act to improve health care by investing in VALUE*, filed by Governor Charles D. Baker. One of the Chamber's guiding health care policy principles is that the state must strike a balance between supporting our cornerstone health care industry and ensuring that world-class care is accessible and affordable for residents, businesses, and the state budget.

This wide-ranging legislation includes several topics that strike that balance and are long overdue for action. Embracing telemedicine, controlling surprise billing, and expanding scope of practice are all necessary changes. While there are debates over details, our members agree that it is time to make legislative progress so Massachusetts does not fall behind other states in its ability to provide residents high quality and affordable health care.

- Telemedicine will bring the delivery of medicine up to date with the latest technology to provide patients expanded access to medical professionals while maintaining quality care. The Chamber supports ensuring access to telemedicine through coverage parity.
- Reforming surprise out-of-network billing is important for patients. Well-crafted policy aimed at increasing transparency will make it easier for patients to interact with the health care system and understand their health care spending, thus reducing the financial burden on residents without negatively impacting their access to quality care.
- Expanding scope of practice and provider treatment authority would provide Massachusetts residents better access to lower cost health care providers which can generate savings for the state and the commercial market and improve access to quality care.

As with any comprehensive legislation, the Legislature should consider the impacts this bill will have on our broader economy. This consideration is particularly relevant because health care plays an integral role in our regional and state economy. In Massachusetts, the health care industry directly accounts for about 18 percent of jobs in the state and indirectly accounts for tens of thousands of additional jobs.¹ The industry here includes world class providers, pharmaceutical breakthroughs, and among the largest share of insured residents in the country.

Since health care is largely an employer-provided benefit, we ask that you also consider the impacts these proposals will have on employers and employees alike. Changes that could increase costs for employers should be considered in context with the many recent policy changes that directly affect employers, such as paid family and medical leave and minimum wage increases, and other proposed policy changes.

Thank you for your consideration and your thoughtful deliberation on these issues. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James E. Rooney".

James E. Rooney
President and CEO

cc: Members of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2019