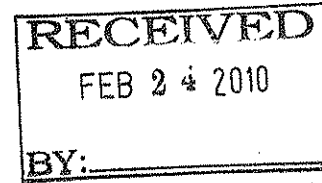


February 22, 2010



To: Members, Wisconsin State Assembly

From: Wisconsin Employers in Support of AB 207:

Body Shop Supply Co. Inc.
City of Monroe
City of Stoughton
Data Dimensions
The Fall River Group, Inc.
First Supply LLC
HUFOR, Inc.
Mead & Hunt

Monroe Truck Equipment
Seats Incorporated
Spunecast, Inc.
Steinhafels, Inc. and Steinhafels Warehouse, Inc.
The Swiss Colony
Wisconsin Auto & Truck Dealers Association Insurance
Zimbrick, Inc.
Zinga Industries, Inc.

Re: Assembly Bill 207, Requiring Disclosure of "Facility Fees"

As employers who provide health benefits to our employees and their families, we believe Assembly Bill 207 (AB 207) is a necessary and important piece of legislation. The bill would require hospitals and other providers to alert patients of facility fees associated with office visits. These fees can be charged, *in addition to* the full price for an office visit, when the clinician providing the service does not own the building within which care is delivered. **Based on an analysis of employers' claims data, total billed charges are 78.7% higher when there is a facility fee compared to when there is not.** What's more, consumers often do not realize they have incurred a facility fee until the bill arrives, or that this fee could have been avoided by using a clinic where these fees are not charged.

We are not in a position to tell other businesses what they should bill their customers, but disclosing charges is a basic ethical business practice. Regardless of who pays the bill (employers, consumers, insurers, Medicare or Medicaid), consumers have a right to know this fee will be charged so they have the opportunity to make informed decisions about their care.

Recently, the Assembly Committee on Public Health approved Substitute Amendment 2 to Assembly Bill 207 that, among other things, weakens the notification requirement for consumers. The amendment, introduced to address concerns of certain hospitals, allows facilities to forgo the notification in cases of "repeat" patients seen for the same service within a certain time period. Now there are lobbying efforts underway to weaken the notification requirement even further to require the notification just once in a patient's lifetime.

Employers watching this process are frustrated. We believe cost transparency is key to transforming health care, and notifying every patient of facility fees every time they are charged is a small step in the right direction. The latest attempt to require the notice only once in a patient's lifetime is unacceptable, and weakens the bill to the point where it will do almost nothing to help consumers understand the cost of their health care.

Please help Wisconsin employers who provide health insurance to their employees by supporting Assembly Bill 207 as originally drafted and helping it reach the Assembly floor. This small step toward health cost transparency is long overdue.