



8/31/15

The Honorable Nancy Wyman
State Capital
LTGovernor.Wyman@ct.gov

Dear Lieutenant Governor Wyman:

Several Steering Committee members and Consumer Advisory Board members wish to express our concern over the process, substance, and timelines of the HIT Council. As you know, a range of issues have been raised at the steering committee meetings, but they have not been fully addressed.

At the end of 2014, DSS provided a presentation to the Steering Committee, regarding their capacity to integrate data. The presentation included information from a vendor, ZATO. At that meeting DSS was questioned about ZATO's health care experience. ZATO indicated they had not implemented their solution in health care settings, rather, their expertise to date was in security including NSA. Committee members asked DSS if they had contracted with ZATO for SIM deliverables, and the committee was told no. It seems fair to say that many members of the steering committee were concerned and confused as to why ZATO would be presenting to the committee.

In July, when the HIT Council's charter was presented, several issues were raised from the format of the charter as well as the work plan for the Council. Commissioner Bremby invited suggestions for revisions. Steering committee members requested consideration of decision criteria to guide the Council's recommendations, principles on which recommendations would be founded, a provision outlining due diligence to ensure a fair and productive process for selection of vendors and products. In addition at that meeting, a member asked given that ZATO was not well received by the committee in 2014, why they were being named in the work plan. The member went on to express a "strong skepticism" regarding ZATO as a vendor with other members echoing his concern.

At the August 21st meeting of the HIT Council, a revised charter and a work plan were presented which included ZATO testing quality metrics in September. When HIT Council members questioned why this pilot was occurring in light of quality metrics not being finalized, the HIT Council not receiving a requested demo from ZATO, and the Council still not getting answers to several questions regarding ZATO's capabilities. Staff and consultants indicated it was necessary to move forward with ZATO pilot testing if Connecticut were to meet grant deadlines.

Given the importance of HIT, we feel it is critical to raise the following:

- The substantial delay in presenting the HIT Council's charter for approval despite requests from the Steering Committee limits the steering committee's ability to provide meaningful oversight and suggestions for improvement in the face of deadlines.
- Best practice recommends strong due diligence be exercised when contracting with technology vendors so promises and assumptions can be tested as part of a selection process. This increases the opportunity for success. According to the materials provided the HIT council, it appears that rather than test quality metrics with two to three selected potential vendors only one is being pursued. The defacto result of this action is that ZATO is the selected vendor unless they are unable to perform which ironically will result in delayed implementation.
- We appreciate the pressing nature of the grant deadlines; yet how many technology projects have failed due to unrealistic timelines and flawed due diligence? We fear CT is at risk by not exerting a strong competitive due diligence process.
- According to the proposed HIT Council charter, the role of the Council is to make recommendations. What happens if the Steering committee is presented choices that are rejected yet the work is scheduled to proceed? Many have felt that decisions were already made by staff, and the process was one of staff persuading the HIT Council and the Steering Committee that the staff decision is correct, rather than using the Council and Steering Committee to advise on making a decision. If that is the case, it begs the question why we are here.
- Conflict of interest is a key concern, and the state has worked to assure that conflicts are surfaced, but having only one vendor come to the Steering committee or HIT Council brings into question whether this is a fair and competitive process.
- The steering committee has yet to see an overall technology plan with timelines and deliverables to ensure the state has the capacity to support the goals and objectives of the SIM plan to transform the health delivery system. Both the work of the Quality Council and the Practice Transformation Task Force are dependent on collaborative work processes and successful execution of their proposed measures. Ensuring this collaboration as SIM goes forward is essential.

We are more than happy to discuss this matter with you and look forward to your response and proposed next steps.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia Baker

Arlene Murphy

Jane McNichol

Pat Checko

Frances Padilla

Jan Van Tassel

Alta Lash

Robin Sparks