



**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, March 14, 2007**

**HB 7155, An Act Concerning A Professional Assistance Program For  
Health Care Professionals**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 7155, An Act Concerning A Professional Assistance Program For Healthcare Professionals.**

This bill would facilitate the establishment of programs to provide prevention, intervention, referral assistance, and rehabilitation or support services to healthcare professionals with a chemical dependency, emotional or behavioral disorder, or physical or psychological illness. Connecticut is fortunate to have talented and qualified healthcare professionals who desire to care for patients, but healthcare professionals, like anyone else, are not immune from the effects of alcoholism, drug dependency, or physical or psychological illness.

The healthcare professional assistance program outlined in this proposed legislation would provide a private and confidential opportunity for medical professionals in the state to obtain needed rehabilitation services. Patient safety is enhanced when a healthcare professional at risk for impairment can receive early intervention and assistance, before an impairment impacts patient care. HB 7155 would enable professional societies to make this type of program available to healthcare professionals in the state who may not have the opportunity to obtain this help from other sources in a confidential manner, without fear of sanction or reprisal. Such a program would protect the safety of Connecticut's patients by not only providing treatment for at risk professionals, but also reducing the risk of relapse through the structured monitoring of rehabilitating individuals.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.