



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

HB 7376, An Act Establishing The Connecticut Health Information Network

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 7376, An Act Establishing The Connecticut Health Information Network**.

HB 7376 establishes a Connecticut Health Information Network for the purpose of integrating state health and social services data. The intent of the bill is to integrate state health and social services data consistent with state and federal privacy laws. The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, better known as HIPAA, has become the bedrock of every patient's expectation for the use and disclosure of information they share with healthcare providers. People now have a legitimate reason to believe there is a baseline of rules that protects the privacy and security of all of their medical records.

The implementation of a single network designed to collect and store patients' health information at a state level needs to include HIPAA level protections, at a minimum. In order to provide clear rules, and constant protection, the state needs to affirmatively adopt HIPAA standards for the proposed Connecticut Health Information Network. This step is required because the data the system would be collecting includes both HIPAA protected and non-HIPAA protected information mixed together. This mix of data raises questions about how information will be used or redisclosed. Without adopting these standards, the public would have a false sense that, when they share information and providers are required or requested to share that information with the state, the information will continue to be protected.

Connecticut's citizens deserve to feel secure about the protection of their personal health information and data, particularly when that information is in the hands of the state. By statutorily agreeing to adopt the high-level of protection that HIPAA provides, the state can better ensure that these protections are real.

Section of HB 7376 attempts to provide HIPAA protection but CHA believes in order to clearly protect patients expectations and right to privacy section 3 should be amended by adding the following language as a new subsection (c) of section 3:

(c) To protect the confidentiality and security of personal information, the Connecticut Health Information Network shall follow all HIPAA requirements and standards applicable to a "covered entity" as that term is defined in HIPAA. All agencies and entities, public or private, which are covered entities pursuant to HIPAA, and who submit data to the Connecticut Health Information Network, shall continue to abide by all HIPAA requirements and standards.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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