CHA CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Friday, February 29, 2008

HB 5542, An Act Concerning The Use Of Telemedicine To Promote Efficiency In The Delivery Of Health Care Services

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5542, An Act Concerning The Use Of Telemedicine To Promote Efficiency In The Delivery Of Health Care Services**.

HB 5542 is aimed at improving non-emergent, physician office-setting interaction with patients to improve healthcare access and outcomes. CHA applauds and supports that goal. Unfortunately, the text of the bill, as written, is broad enough to accidentally sweep in vital hospital services, potentially creating a patient safety problem, and thus may have the unintended effect of reducing the current, necessary services used in hospital settings.

Hospitals rely heavily on the types of technology discussed in the bill, specifically interactive audio, visual, and data communications for various processes, including supplementing coverage for radiology reads. Often there are no other options, particularly during emergency situations, and the delivery of care frequently depends on the use of these services. Additionally, many translation services are implemented through interactive audio and video technologies. The bill also would have the unintended consequence of limiting these critical services.

To avoid these unintended consequences, CHA respectfully requests that the following language be added to HB 5542 to clarify that the bill is not intended to apply in hospital settings, and that it will not affect current practices relating to translation services for patients:

> As used in sections 1 to 5, inclusive, of this act, "health care provider" means a person licensed to practice under chapter 370, 372, 373, 375, 376c, 377, 378, 379, 380 or 382 of the general statutes <u>but shall not include a person providing services at, by, or through a hospital licensed under Chapter 368v of the general statutes</u>; and "telemedicine" means the delivery of health care services and any diagnosis, consultation or treatment using interactive audio, interactive video or interactive data communication, and includes the types of services described in subsection (d) of section 20-9 of the general statutes <u>but shall not include language translation services, including interpreting for the deaf and hard of hearing, or interpreting for persons with limited English proficiency.</u>

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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

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