CHA CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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

SB 246, An Act Establishing A Loan Forgiveness Program For Historically Underrepresented Students Pursuing Careers In Nursing

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB 246, An Act Establishing A Loan Forgiveness Program For Historically Underrepresented Students Pursuing Careers In Nursing.** This bill would require the state to establish a loan forgiveness program for students of racial or ethnic minority groups who are pursuing a degree leading to licensure as a registered nurse. Loans would be completely forgiven for students who practice as registered nurses in Connecticut for a period of five years and prorated in yearly increments for periods of practice of less than five years. The Department of Public Health would be charged with limiting participation in the loan forgiveness program to 15 students annually, and advertising the program in consultation with the Department of Higher Education. The Commissioner of Public Health, in consultation with the Board of Governors of Higher Education, would adopt regulations for the program by no later than July 1, 2009.

CHA supports initiatives that are assistive to hospitals and other healthcare organizations in creating a healthcare workforce that better reflects the diverse communities we serve. The loan forgiveness program provided for by SB 246 would promote the preparation of much needed registered nurses, while ultimately enhancing the diversity of the nursing workforce in our hospitals and healthcare organizations. The program would support students of racial or ethnic minority groups to finance their education, and would foster the retention of these individuals as professional nurses within the state. Enactment of SB 246 would be a positive step toward addressing the nursing shortage, increasing workforce diversity, and providing career opportunity for Connecticut's communities.

Thank you for consideration of our position.

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

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