CONNECTICUT
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 18, 2010

HB 5025, An Act Concerning A Green Technology, Life Science And Health Information Technology Jobs Loan Forgiveness Program

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 5025, An Act Concerning A Green Technology, Life Science And Health Information Technology Jobs Loan Forgiveness Program.**

HB 5025 establishes a Connecticut green technology, life science, and health information technology loan forgiveness program to be administered by the Department of Higher Education. CHA supports the establishment of this loan forgiveness program.

It is CHA's mission to advance the health of individuals and communities by leading, representing, and serving hospitals and their related healthcare organizations that are accountable to the community and committed to health improvement. In this regard, programs that support Connecticut's citizens in pursuing education that will enable the advancement of green technology, life science research, and health information technology are consistent with the promotion of health and support of communities. Health information technology is an area of significant focus for CHA and its members, as it is critical to the provision of patient care and the future of healthcare delivery.

Hospitals utilize health information technology to improve the safety and quality of patient care through systems such as computerized physician order entry, computerized decision support systems, and bar-coding for medication administration. Various efficiencies are realized as hospitals move toward the development of full electronic medical records affording practitioners the ability to readily access key information that supports patient diagnosis, treatment, and care without redundant paperwork. On a broader front, hospitals are key participants in state and national initiatives to improve healthcare through health information technology and exchange.

Hospitals and other healthcare organizations will need to employ a growing cadre of health information technology workers to meet the extraordinary demands of developing, supporting, and connecting systems for healthcare delivery and reform. Meeting these demands will require a wide range of health information technology skill sets and positions including hardware and network specialists, business and clinical analysts, and managers of specialized databases.

The significant need for health information technology workers, combined with loan forgiveness support to educate them, will provide diverse opportunities for those in Connecticut newly entering the workforce or seeking to utilize information technology skills in a new field. We urge you to support HB 5025, which will assist state residents in preparing for these very important jobs to support Connecticut's health and future.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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