



Community Providers Association
Caring for Connecticut.

March 2, 2010

**CCPA Testimony on HB 5354 An Act to Provide Incentives for Hospitals to Adopt
Electronic Health Records**

The Connecticut Community Providers Association represents organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant challenges including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities.

All of the organizations we represent are in the process of or will be in the process of developing and implementing Electronic Health Records for their organizations. All of these organizations bill Medicaid, Medicare or receive pass through Medicaid funding that will warrant use of electronic medical record systems. All fall under the HIPAA HITECH provisions.

We have embarked on an ambitious educational process so that organizations accustomed to maintaining records through a variety of electronic and paper systems can make the transition to an electronic reporting system that can meet clinical, billing, accounting, data reporting, client privacy and audit accountability demands. Our members are meeting with vendors and discussing systems that might meet the needs of our broader industries, most notably the needs of organizations that support people with developmental disabilities and those that support children and adults with mental health and substance use issues.

These systems are costly. With hardware, software, training and updates, costs can easily run to hundreds and thousands of dollars per agency just for startup expense.

Our national associations have made efforts to include behavioral health organizations in the ARRA incentive plans, however under recently proposed CMS rules, community based behavioral health organizations are not eligible to receive incentive payments as entities,

CCPA

35 Cold Springs Rd., Suite 522, Rocky Hill, CT 06067-3165
(P)860-257-7909 • (F)860-257-7777
www.ccpa-inc.org

although individual practitioners such as psychiatrists and nurse practitioners (eligible professionals) are eligible to receive these incentive payments.

We are seeking your assistance to provide state incentives for community based developmental disability and behavioral health providers to acquire electronic health record systems. We ask that you consider amending the proposed legislation to read:

Line 8: (2) incentive payments for hospitals, [and] eligible professionals and community providers who are meaningful electronic health record users.

We look forward to working with the Department of Public Health and your Committee to make sure that community providers are included in EHR incentives.

Thank you.