CHA CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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TESTIMONY OF
STEPHEN FRAYNE
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HEALTH POLICY
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 4, 2010

HB 5300, An Act Concerning Hospital Charges For Uninsured Patients

My name is Stephen Frayne. I am the Senior Vice President, Health Policy, of the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA). I am testifying today in opposition to **HB 5300, An Act Concerning Hospital Charges For Uninsured Patients.**

Connecticut's hospitals are among the finest in the nation. Focused on quality and patient safety, and providing access to the most skilled professionals, the highest quality of care, and the latest technology, Connecticut hospitals deliver. Providing care to all who need it, regardless of ability to pay, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week year-round, hospitals are integral to the quality of life and health in our communities. Hospitals are among the largest employers in the state, supporting over 97,000 jobs and generating nearly $13 billion in annual economic activity. In more ways than one, the health of our communities is inextricably linked to the health of their local hospitals.

HB 5300 modifies Section 19a-673(b) and (c) of the General Statues. Current law requires that individuals with incomes below 250 percent of the federal poverty level and ineligible for state-sponsored insurance be granted a discount on their hospital bill, paying only for what the service costs. HB 5300 seeks to modify existing law in two ways. First, it expands eligibility for a discount to anyone without health insurance, without regard to income. Second, it changes the amount the uninsured must pay for hospital services to 115 percent of the lowest amount paid by an insurer or Medicare, whichever is less.

As proposed, HB 5300 moves us in the opposite direction of where we need to go – we should instead be encouraging individuals to have insurance. Since the original passage of Section19a-673 in 1994, much in Connecticut has changed. State-sponsored insurance programs have become easier to access and a wide variety of affordable health insurance products have been created, tailored to fit individual needs. In addition, CHA hospitals, without exception, offer discounts to the uninsured more generous than required by existing law.

Given current hospital practice, the wide variety of products available, and the likely expansion of health insurance options and subsidies, there is no reason to adopt HB 5300.

Please oppose HB 5300, An Act Concerning Hosptial Charges For Uninsured Patients. Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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