



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 27, 2013**

**HB 6004, An Act Concerning Health Care Services For The
Uninsured At Community Hospitals**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6004, An Act Concerning Health Care Services For The Uninsured At Community Hospitals**.

Connecticut hospitals play a critical role in the health and quality of life of our communities. They provide care to all people regardless of their ability to pay. Connecticut hospitals are the ultimate safety net providers, and their doors are always open.

Every day, healthcare professionals in hospitals see the consequences and health implications for individuals and families who lack access to care and coverage. Emergency departments are filled with individuals who cannot find a physician to care for them because they are uninsured or underinsured – or they are Medicaid beneficiaries and few physicians will accept the low rates paid by Medicaid. Throughout Connecticut, our emergency rooms are treating both those who have delayed seeking treatment because of inadequate or no coverage, and those who have no other place to receive care.

Thus, as frontline caregivers, Connecticut hospitals are absolutely committed to initiatives that improve access to safe, high-quality care and expand access to coverage. Connecticut hospitals stand ready to partner on Medicaid system reform and innovation to create effective solutions that offer a win for everyone: better access for patients, lower costs for the state, and better payment for providers. The ultimate goal is to establish a healthcare system through which coverage is affordable and sustainable, and access to care is guaranteed.

To the extent that HB 6004 would help local hospitals provide healthcare services for the uninsured, CHA enthusiastically supports the proposal. The bill is especially welcomed by hospitals in light of the proposed biennial budget, which makes significant reductions to hospital funding—cutting more than \$550 MILLION in the next biennium. These cuts will devastate hospitals. They will cause immediate and lasting damage to Connecticut's health and human services safety net—affecting patients, employees, and every community in the state.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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