



**TESTIMONY  
LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, February 18, 2014**

**SB 61, An Act Concerning Workers' Compensation and Liability for Hospital Services**

Yale New Haven Health System (YNHHS) -- Connecticut's leading healthcare system with over 18,000 employees and nearly 6000 medical staff appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning SB 61, An Act Concerning Workers' Compensation and Liability for Hospital Services. YNHHS opposes the bill as drafted.

Yale New Haven Health System, through Bridgeport, Greenwich and Yale-New Haven Hospitals, and their affiliated organizations, strives to provide access to integrated, high-value, patient-centered care in collaboration with others who share our values. We offer our patients a range of healthcare services, from primary care to the most complex care available anywhere in the world. Bridgeport, Greenwich and Yale-New Haven Hospitals are committed members of their local communities.

YNHHS hospital affiliates care for more than one quarter of the State's Medicaid enrollees and provide millions in free and uncompensated care to those who need our services and cannot pay for them. Every day, our staff cares for individuals and families who lack access to medical, dental and behavioral health care. Our emergency departments are filled with individuals, many of whom have delayed treatment, or who do not have anywhere else to go for medical or mental health care. In the winter, those in need of shelter from the cold also come to us. Our patients and our communities count on us.

As currently drafted, SB 61 would make drastic changes to Connecticut's workers' compensation laws. The bill would change workers' compensation liability for hospital services rendered prior the July 1, 2016 from what is currently required under Connecticut General Statutes, Section 19a-166, which allows for the negotiation of rates and fees between the payer and hospital. The bill would also limit the time to identify disputes to one year from the date of payment to a hospital or one year from when the employer notifies the hospital of a dispute. Additionally, the bill requires the chairman of the Workers' Compensation Commission to establish a fee schedule for hospital services.

YNHHS currently negotiate rates and contracts with workers' compensation payers, and these changes would only serve to increase our hospitals' burden and reduce payments at a time when hospital reimbursements have deteriorated due to devastating state reductions. In addition to a hospital tax that was implemented in 2011, hospitals are already under-reimbursed for the care we provide to some of the state's sickest patients. Furthermore, the state reduced payments to

hospitals by \$550 million in the 2013 legislative session thus making it difficult for many hospitals to thrive.

Our focus is providing high-quality care to all our patients, but measures such as Senate Bill 61 that constantly chip away at our payment levels make it increasingly difficult to do so. Senate Bill 61 will increase healthcare costs and negatively impact our patients when limited healthcare resources necessary to improve patient care, safety and clinical quality are diverted.

On behalf of YNHHS, we respectfully recommend that the Labor Committee reject Senate Bill 61 as it is currently drafted.

Thank you for your consideration.