



**Testimony of Hartford HealthCare
Submitted to the Labor Committee
March 5, 2015**

Hartford HealthCare appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony on HB 6933 An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling for Employees. Hartford HealthCare opposes this legislation.

This proposal severely impacts a hospital's capacity to manage patient care as staffing needs are largely based on the daily patient census. There is great variability and unpredictability in the volume of emergency visits, ambulatory and inpatient volumes. There is also shift to shift and day to day variability in patient acuity. Each of these demands a different staffing model to assure that the highest quality and safest care is given at all times. Elective procedures may allow lead time for staffing but without that flexibility in the acute care settings it would be impossible to assure that our patients receive the best single standard of care possible. Section 2b of the bill would require written consent from an employee before their work schedule could be altered, needlessly delaying staff and causing serious disruptions in patient care.

The weather over the last six weeks is yet another example of the need for tractability in hospital workforce scheduling. In the event that a severe storm or other area-wide disaster condition occurs, the President and Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer, or VP designee will declare a weather advisory. This advisory will allow department managers to review staffing needs and certain employed staff members may be required to report to work prior to the onset of the severe weather. Declaring a weather advisory provides notice to employed staff members to make arrangements, if possible, to get to and from the hospital. All employed staff members on duty at the time of a weather advisory may be required to remain past the end of the assigned shift to ensure appropriate staffing levels to provide patient care.

Hartford HealthCare realizes the need for work/life balance and schedules are posted in clinical areas four to six weeks ahead of time. Currently, staff is able to find their own replacement by switching shifts as it suits their personal needs. HB 6933 would prohibit that practice and limit an employee's ability to change their schedule.

This proposal in a direct patient care setting would not allow hospitals to respond quickly to sudden changes in patient volume and certainly would have a negative effect in emergencies. It also would pose a danger to patient welfare in some instances. Thank you for consideration of our position. For more information please contact Kim Harrison at 860-263-4137.

Hartford HealthCare is an integrated health care system. The system offers the full continuum of care with five acute-care hospitals in Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, Norwich and Windham.