



State of Connecticut
SENATE

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February 23, 2015

Esteemed members of the Public Health Committee:

I am Senator Tony Hwang, and I am here today to testify in support of SB 252.

Did you know that 14 of Connecticut's hospitals, or about half of all hospitals operating in the state, were penalized by Medicare in December for their high rates of hospital-acquired conditions (HACs), including infections?

If you're like most health care consumers, your answer likely was no. And herein lies the problem:

Connecticut's existing reporting system lacks the immediacy and accessibility that this important public health issue deserves.

SB 252 will change that. By creating an enhanced and unified reporting system, and publishing the results online at the state Department of Public Health's website, Connecticut will send a strong signal that transparency matters and that public health and safety is a top priority.

We, in Connecticut, are fortunate to have some of the best doctors and surgeons in the world, at some of the most well respected hospitals. That is not lost on me. And this proposal is not meant to demonize the hospitals that provide such critical care to our state's residents, nor is it meant to serve as a means for others to demonize them.

The intent of this legislation, which I believe this committee wholeheartedly supports, is to increase transparency in our healthcare system, help create a more informed consumer, and improve the quality of care people receive in our state.

Savvy consumers are already seeking out information on infection rates as they look to make informed decisions about their healthcare. That is great news. The problem is the amount of misinformation and unreliable information readily available on the Internet, and the potential for that to negatively impact consumer decisions and our hospital's reputations.

Through this proposed bill we can fix that, by enhancing the reporting system for HAC's and working to create a user-friendly hub for Connecticut healthcare consumers to easily access this information.

Ultimately, I hope we can one day get to a point where these reports would not be necessary – when no patient acquires an infection while in the hospital. But the reality today is that infections are occurring in our hospitals,

and patients have a right to this information so they can make the most informed and appropriate decision concerning where to receive their healthcare services.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of SB 252.

Kindly,

Tony Hwang
28th District State Senator