



**TESTIMONY OF YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH SYSTEM  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, March 11, 2015**

**SB 812, An Act Concerning Electronic Health Records and Health Information Exchange**

Yale New Haven Health System appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on **SB 812, An Act Concerning Electronic Health Records and Health information Exchange**. While we applaud the Connecticut legislature for reviewing this important matter, the bill causes some concerns, and we encourage the legislature to avoid an unintended consequence of nullifying the efforts of many Connecticut hospitals that are already providing access to their electronic health record systems.

Yale New Haven Health System (YNHHS), comprising Bridgeport Greenwich and Yale-New Haven Hospitals, is Connecticut's leading healthcare system. With over 20,000 employees and over 6,000 medical staff, we are among the largest employers. YNHHS provides comprehensive, cost-effective, advanced patient care characterized by safety, quality and service. We offer our patients a range of healthcare services, from primary care to the most complex care available anywhere in the world. YNHHS hospital affiliates continue to be a safety-net for our communities, and we provide care 24 hours per day, seven days per week. In addition to being economic engines for our communities, YNHHS hospitals care for more than one quarter of the State's Medicaid patients and provide millions in free and uncompensated care to those who need our services and have no ability to pay for them.

YNHHS is strongly committed to the idea that physicians should have ready and rapid access to patient data.

Today, each physician in the State of Connecticut has free, online access from anywhere to YHHS' Electronic Medical record to see the full medical record of each of his or her patients.

In the past 24 months, we have exchanged patient records more than 35,000 times with more than 120 hospitals and physician practices in Connecticut and across the US. We spend more than \$5M annually to maintain free open access to electronic medical records for physicians, to subsidize the cost of the EMR for physicians, and to staff a team of technical experts who build and maintain interfaces from our EMR to other EMRs and lab systems.

In 2010 YNHHS began investing in a state-of-the-art electronic medical records system, known as Epic that improved the way we view, navigate and share patient data. With a changing healthcare environment that is moving toward the advancement of population health, we understood the importance of acquiring a system that could be accessed by healthcare institutions, physicians and patients. While well intended, SB 812 will only serve to create

additional financial burdens for hospitals, while hampering a system that is already working. The bill does not take into account what many hospitals are already doing to share data and provide access to healthcare agencies and community physicians. For example, YNHHS, in the interest of fostering collaboration and clinical data exchange, has initiated a Data Concierge Service where Health IT professionals make personal visits to physicians and other healthcare providers in the region to provide information about the various means available for data exchange and to provide services as needed to establish those connections. These service offerings include:

- All members of the organized medical staff of Bridgeport, Greenwich and Yale-New Haven Hospitals have full access to our EMR today, regardless of the EMR they choose for their practice. It is free and accessible through a standard internet connection
- Through the free EpicCare Link tool, any provider or health agency that shares patients with YNHHS may register and be granted access to view the EMR for their specific patients only. Registration into EpicCare Link is a one-time process that provides ongoing access to any patient for whom the provider/agency can establish their relationship.
- Using Direct Messaging, providers have the ability to securely exchange information with any other provider in the US who has a Direct Messaging address, regardless of their EHR or technology investments. Because Direct Messaging is standards based, it is easy to exchange information outside of internal systems. This service is very inexpensive (\$85 per year) and easy to subscribe and its use is encouraged by the Connecticut Department of Social Services.
- A mobile phone application called Mobile Heartbeat allows secure texting and personalized alerts between the hospitals and providers. Yale New Haven Health is making this application free to physicians.
- The ability to exchange specific, discrete data, from one EMR system to another EMR is accomplished via industry standard (HL7) interfaces.
- Providers may contract with YNHHS to use Epic as their office EMR and practice management solution. Yale New Haven Health subsidizes up to 85% of the cost of the services and, at \$5,000 initially then \$175 per month, this offering is among the least expensive available to physicians.

Rather than revamping a system that is already in place and working, we encourage the Connecticut legislature to collaborate with hospitals and other healthcare agencies to develop and build on best practices. We also encourage a broad-based approach that will accommodate all providers.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.