CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

HB 5356, An Act Concerning Veterans' Health Records

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5356, An Act Concerning Veterans' Health Records.** CHA has concerns about the bill as written.

Before commenting on the bill, it's important to point out that Connecticut hospitals provide core healthcare services to all of the people in Connecticut, 24 hours a day, regardless of ability to pay. Connecticut hospitals offer safe, accessible, equitable, affordable, patient-centered care that protects and improves peoples' lives.

HB 5356 seeks to eliminate a financial barrier for veterans who need their medical records submitted as part of a veteran's benefit claim or appeal to either the federal or state government. CHA supports the idea of removing barriers for veterans relating to these specific government programs and asks that you consider adding clarifying language to avoid anticipated confusion regarding the intent of the proposed legislation.

We would like to note that HB 5356 only addresses records held by practitioners governed by Section 20-7c of the Connecticut General Statues, but does not address records held by other facilities such as hospitals. This will be confusing for all involved. Additionally, we urge that the language be clarified, preferably through use of plain language, not just legal citations, which are consistent with the current law, referencing social security disability applications. This will best facilitate understanding by patients and providers alike. Specifically, the bill should clearly indicate that the types of records intended to be exempt from record fees are limited to "records used to support a claim or appeal for federal or state veterans' benefits."

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.