CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 7, 2017

PROPOSED HB 5077, An Act Concerning The Return Of Unused Prescription Drugs To Pharmacies

PROPOSED HB 5202, An Act Prohibiting Pharmacists From Making Changes To Prescriptions Without Prescriber Consent

PROPOSED HB 5733, An Act Requiring Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Companies To Package Opioids Dispensed In The State In Blister Packs

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **Proposed HB 5077, An Act Concerning The Return Of Unused Prescription Drugs To Pharmacies; Proposed HB 5202, An Act Prohibiting Pharmacists From Making Changes To Prescriptions Without Prescriber Consent**; and **Proposed HB 5733, An Act Requiring Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Companies To Package Opioids Dispensed In The State In Blister Packs.**

HB 5077 would require Connecticut pharmacies to accept unused prescription drugs and dispose of them. CHA opposes the bill as written because it is unclear to which pharmacies the bill would apply. Hospitals' institutional pharmacies are not equipped to take back unused medications from patients or consumers once they have already left the hospital. Hospitals – each with multiple public entrances, and always with a locked pharmacy that cannot be accessed by the public – would not be able to apply comply with the rigorous security and handling features necessary to account properly for the returned drugs, or to meet all federal handling and destruction requirements. Requiring hospitals to do this would create a diversion and misuse risk – and would not solve any drug-related issues.

HB 5202 would require prescriber consent prior to a pharmacist making any changes to a drug prescription. CHA opposes the bill. While well-intentioned, this bill would cause unintended consequences. It is not always easy – and sometimes not possible – to communicate with a prescriber at the moment a patient is at a pharmacy. Requiring actual contact will cause patients to be deprived of drugs frequently, potentially endangering them and complicating their medical treatment. There are various reasons why a prescription may need to be filled in

a manner that is different from exactly how the prescriber wrote the prescription, including: the pharmacy does not have the specific brand of drug prescribed, but an equivalent drug is available; the patient would prefer the generic drug to reduce his or her co-pay; the patient would prefer less of the drug due to insurance or cost issues; the patient's insurance does not cover the drug prescribed; the prescriber has written the wrong address for the patient; the prescriber has omitted the required information concerning a patient's age when the prescription is for a controlled substance; or the prescriber has written for tablets but the patient would prefer capsules because they are easier to swallow.

HB 5733 would require pharmaceutical manufacturing companies to package all prescription opioids that are being dispensed in the state in blister packs. CHA opposes the bill. There may be times when blister pack medications make sense, but not all of the time. Hospital pharmacies, drug dispensing equipment, and drug delivery systems are not designed to utilize blister packs. Requiring blister packs for dispensed opioids would be unworkable for hospitals, and would result in added costs to the healthcare system.

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