



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 9, 2010**

**HB 5024, An Act Concerning An Education Doctoral Degree Program In
Nursing Education**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 5024, An Act Concerning An Education Doctoral Degree Program In Nursing Education.**

HB 5024 allows the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System to develop an education doctoral degree program in nursing education. CHA supports the establishment of this new education doctoral degree program.

It is essential that Connecticut pay careful attention to the development and supply of nursing faculty to avert a severe nursing shortage and the consequences it will have on the state's healthcare system. The shortage of nursing faculty has been identified as a key barrier to adequately preparing the nursing workforce critically needed within the next decade. Connecticut is projected to have one of the worst nursing shortages in the nation due to a demographic phenomenon that places the state in a particularly vulnerable position. As the state with the ninth oldest population in the nation, Connecticut's demand for healthcare is high and expected to balloon as the baby boomer generation ages. Among the baby boomers retiring over the next decade will be nurses whose average age is in the late forties, and nursing educators, whose average age is generally higher.

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), large numbers of qualified applicants continue to be turned away from schools of nursing due to faculty shortages. Over 49,000 were turned away from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2008 alone. For the years 2006 and 2007, the Connecticut League for Nursing reported that an average of 1400 qualified applicants per year were turned away from nursing programs in Connecticut because of lack of faculty. The National League for Nursing cites additional concerning trends including the expected retirement of two thirds of the full-time nursing faculty workforce between the years 2011 and 2021, an increasing proportion of faculty members working part-time, and a decline in faculty members with higher degrees. A special survey conducted by the AACN in August 2009 demonstrated that over ninety percent of vacant faculty positions reported were those that required or preferred a doctoral degree.

The establishment of a new doctoral program in education in the Connecticut State University System will increase the number of nurses with doctoral degrees and should help increase in the number of desperately needed nurse educators.

Thank you for consideration of our position.

For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.