



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 5, 2014**

HB 5457, An Act Concerning The Collection Of Data By Health And Human Services Agencies

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5457, An Act Concerning The Collection Of Data By Health And Human Services Agencies**. CHA has concerns with the bill as written.

Before outlining our concerns, it's important to detail the critical role hospitals play in the health and quality of life of our communities. All of our lives have, in some way, been touched by a hospital: through the birth of a child, a life saved by prompt action in an emergency room, or the compassionate end-of-life care for someone we love. Or perhaps our son, daughter, husband, wife, or friend works for, or is a volunteer at, a Connecticut hospital.

Hospitals treat everyone who comes through their doors 24 hours a day, regardless of ability to pay. In 2012, Connecticut hospitals provided nearly \$225 million in free services for those who could not afford to pay.

Connecticut hospitals are committed to initiatives that improve access to safe, equitable, high-quality care. They are ensuring that safety is reinforced as the most important focus—the foundation on which all hospital work is done. Connecticut hospitals launched the first statewide initiative in the country to become high reliability organizations, creating cultures with a relentless focus on safety and a goal to eliminate all preventable harm. This program is saving lives.

Providing culturally competent care, eliminating disparities, and achieving health equity are also priorities of Connecticut hospitals. The CHA Diversity Collaborative, a first-in-the-nation program to achieve these goals, has been recognized as a national model.

As part of the Collaborative, hospitals recognize the importance of collecting race, ethnicity, and preferred language data. The collection of data is a critical step in improving access and care for all.

HB 5457 calls for the Department of Public Health, the Department of Social Services, and any other state agency that provides services related to health or human services to collect primary data from those they serve. Data to be collected will include race, ethnicity, gender, primary language, disability status, and income, provided that the data is aggregated in such a way that does not identify the person individually.

Should the Committee wish to move forward with HB 5457, CHA requests the opportunity to work with stakeholders on revised standardization language that aligns with CMS' Electronic Health Record Meaningful Use program and takes into account nationally recognized data standards that include the recommendations of the American Hospital Association's Health Research & Educational Trust.

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