



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016**

SB 70, An Act Concerning Telehealth Providers

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 70, An Act Concerning Telehealth Providers**. CHA supports the changes in SB 70.

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.

In the 2015 Legislative Session, Connecticut began an effort to set parameters for the appropriate use of telehealth services. Telehealth services focus on delivering care through mechanisms that are, essentially, video-conferencing between a patient and provider, and usually in a community care setting. The parameters set forth in the 2015 law (P.A. 15-88, Section 1, now codified as Section 19a-906 of the General Statutes in the 2016 Supplement) include a variety of requirements to ensure that patients understand the service being offered, so that patients can exercise a reasonable choice in whether to participate in telehealth instead of choosing in-person care visits.

Although the 2015 law listed a litany of licensed healthcare practitioners specifically covered by telehealth rules, some providers were inadvertently left off the list. SB 70 seeks to correct this oversight by adding speech and language pathologists, as well as respiratory care practitioners, to the list of those covered by the telehealth law. CHA supports these additions.

Additionally, CHA requests that the law be clarified to reflect that its intent is not to restrict the use of any technology, telemetry, or similar communication method when deployed in the emergency department or for hospital inpatients. While the 2015 law attempted to make this important distinction by specifically indicating that the law did not prohibit "orders of healthcare providers for hospital outpatients or inpatients," we do not believe that language is sufficiently clear to avoid interfering with patient care.

CHA respectfully requests that the law be amended for clarity by adding the following:

“Nothing in this Section shall apply hospital inpatients, or to care delivered in a hospital emergency department.”

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