



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 10, 2020**

**SB 340, An Act Concerning Collection Efforts By Hospitals And Collection Agents
Against Uninsured And Underinsured Patients**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 340, An Act Concerning Collection Efforts By Hospitals And Collection Agents Against Uninsured And Underinsured Patients**. CHA opposes the bill.

Guided by their mission of caring for patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of patients' ability to pay, Connecticut hospitals have a long tradition of providing charity care and financial assistance to patients in need.

SB 340 proposes to limit the amount a hospital may collect from an individual who is insured under a high deductible health plan (HDHP), and restrict the manner in which a hospital may collect unpaid bills for healthcare services provided. These proposed changes do not reflect the recommendations of a recent task force on HDHPs, are unfairly focused on hospitals, and create new financial restrictions that will unduly impede a hospital's ability to achieve its mission of caring.

The imposition of high-deductible payments through the use of HDHPs is on the rise in Connecticut and across the country. In 2019, the General Assembly established a task force to analyze the impact of HDHPs on consumers. Over the course of several months, task force members conducted a detailed review of HDHPs. In February 2020, the task force issued a report that included 22 recommendations in five areas:

- Helping people understand their insurance better
- Changing how deductibles work
- Making health savings accounts work for more people
- Helping people pay for healthcare
- Bringing healthcare prices down

Nowhere among the recommendations did the task force propose to limit the amount a hospital may collect from an individual who is insured under an HDHP or prescribe the manner in which a hospital collects on unpaid medical bills. On the contrary, while the report

acknowledged that for a certain segment of the population HDHP deductibles may lead to unmanageable medical debt, it did not see the solution as hospital focused.

CHA is committed to sustaining and improving access to high quality healthcare services across our state. We appreciate that affordability is central to that commitment and every actor in the system, i.e., provider, payer, pharmaceutical and device manufacturer, employer, and government, has an important role to play in this work. Unfortunately, this legislation will not put our state on a path to address affordability in our healthcare system.

CHA encourages the Committee to reject SB 340 and consider taking action regarding HDHPs that are consistent with the recommendations included in the High Deductible Task Force Report.

CHA looks forward to working with this Committee on this and other issues.

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