

**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

SB 55, An Act Concerning Additional Benefits For Wage Loss Under The Workers' Compensation Act

SB 57, An Act Concerning Requiring Employers To Provide Injured Employees The Forms Necessary For Filing A Claim For Workers' Compensation

SB 63, An Act Concerning Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder And The Workers' Compensation Act

SB 64, An Act Concerning Scarring Awards Under The Workers' Compensation Act

HB 5334, An Act Concerning Timely Medical Treatment for Injured Workers

The Connecticut Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 55, An Act Concerning Additional Benefits For Wage Loss Under The Workers' Compensation Act; SB 57, An Act Concerning Requiring Employers To Provide Injured Employees The Forms Necessary For Filing A Claim For Workers' Compensation; SB 63, An Act Concerning Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder And The Workers' Compensation Act; SB 64, An Act Concerning Scarring Awards Under The Workers' Compensation Act; and HB 5334, An Act Concerning Timely Medical Treatment For Injured Workers.**

Connecticut's hospitals, like good schools and safe roads, are an essential part of the state's economy. Providing patients and communities with the finest quality healthcare services is the highest priority for Connecticut's not-for-profit hospitals. Hospitals fulfill a vital role, caring for Connecticut residents 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and they make enormous contributions to the health and quality of life for millions of Connecticut residents. Last year, Connecticut hospitals provided 2.1 million days of inpatient care. In addition, hospitals provide a significant amount of outpatient care. Last year, Connecticut hospitals provided more than 4 million outpatient visits. Every moment of every day, hospitals touch the lives of Connecticut residents by providing high quality healthcare services.

What is often overlooked, however, are the vital contributions that Connecticut's not-for-profit hospitals make to the state's economy. Connecticut's hospitals are both the economic bedrock and engine in their communities. They are major employers, offering jobs at all skill and salary levels in a growing employment sector. Hospitals provide important secondary income and job benefits to the local economy. They serve as a magnet for other healthcare business and a stimulus for new businesses, such as retail shops, banks, grocery stores, and family restaurants. This year, CHA conducted an analysis of the economic impact of Connecticut hospitals that shows that Connecticut hospitals and health systems generate nearly \$12.2 billion per year for the state and local economies – about 6% of the Gross State Product; provide 70,000 jobs in our communities generating approximately \$6.5 billion in annual local economy payroll; and purchase goods and services generating approximately \$2.7 billion annually in local economic activity. During the last three years, there has been a 24% increase in hospital contributions to Connecticut's economy – from \$9.8 billion in 2004 to \$12.2 billion in 2006.

The ability of Connecticut hospitals to continue to make such contributions is constantly threatened. Payments for individuals enrolled in state and federal programs always fall short of the amount needed to cover the cost of care. These deficits rob Connecticut hospitals of the dollars needed for investment in facilities and acquiring the latest technology. Connecticut hospitals are also struggling with a growing workforce shortage.

In addition to underfunding by the state and federal government in the Medicaid, SAGA, and Medicare programs, hospitals are facing skyrocketing costs and expenses. CHA urges you to reject SB 55, SB 57, SB 63, SB 64, and HB 5334 as each will increase the costs and administrative burdens in handling workers' compensation claims for our employees.

Thank you for consideration of our position.

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