



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Friday, February 27, 2009**

**HB 6538, An Act Concerning The Collection And Release
Of Data By The Office Of Health Care Access**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6538, An Act Concerning The Collection And Release Of Data By The Office Of Health Care Access**.

HB 6538 establishes a data protection committee under the Office of Healthcare Care Access (OHCA) that will oversee the collection and release to “qualified researchers” patient-identifiable information from hospitals and other healthcare providers. In determining the release of patient-identifiable information the Committee’s objective is to preserve patient confidentiality in a manner that conforms with state and federal law but also furthers the public interest in the disclosure of certain data. HB 6538 makes a significant change in state policy as it now authorizes a data committee of the state to release patient-identifiable health records to third parties.

The bill would require hospitals to submit patient-identifiable information and authorizes, but does not require, the commissioner to collect such data from other healthcare facilities or institutions. Currently Connecticut acute care hospitals provide significant financial and patient data to OHCA, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Public Health. While Connecticut hospitals support OHCA’s goal of encouraging research and data analysis to improve the healthcare system, CHA urges the Public Health Committee to amend the bill to require the Commissioner to collect data from all healthcare facilities and institutions. To the extent that HB 6538 requires only hospitals to provide OHCA with patient-identifiable information but does not require other healthcare facilities and institutions to provide the same data, CHA opposes HB 6538. As currently drafted, HB 6538 places increased obligations and costs only on hospitals.

If you decide to take action on HB 6538, to ensure that all healthcare providers are treated equally, CHA respectfully requests that you amend the bill as follows:

(b) The Office of Health Care Access shall require short-term acute care general or children's hospitals and [may] **SHALL** require a health care facility or institution, as defined in section 19a-630, to submit patient-identifiable data, including inpatient discharge data, outpatient encounter data, data taken from medical record abstracts and hospital bills and such other data as deemed necessary by the office to fulfill the duties specified in section 19a-613.

Thank you for consideration of our position.

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