



**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, February 23, 2011**

**SB 969, An Act Providing For An Independent Review Of Any Finding Of  
Deficiency By The Department Of Public Health Relating To A Hospital's  
Compliance With Applicable Public Health Statutes And Regulations**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 969, An Act Providing For An Independent Review Of Any Finding Of Deficiency By The Department Of Public Health Relating To A Hospital's Compliance With Applicable Public Health Statutes And Regulations**. CHA strongly supports SB 969.

Whenever DPH reviews a hospital, either in the course of routine oversight or in response to a complaint or reported problem, it creates a list of questions and concerns about the hospital's processes and procedures that DPH believes may not be working properly. DPH usually discusses the list with the hospital to understand the full picture of what happened in the reviewed circumstances. The scope of DPH's review covers everything from mundane matters, such as good laundry practices, to detailed medical procedures like neurosurgery. The overall goal of this oversight process – a goal shared by DPH and hospitals – is to ensure that patients are getting safe, effective care, and that all practices are being constantly evaluated.

After collecting all relevant input and information, DPH provides the hospital with a formal list of any deficiencies found in DPH's review. Occasionally, there is a good faith disagreement between DPH and the hospital about whether the issue is actually a deficiency based on prevailing medical and operational standards, and nationally recognized best practices.

Currently, there is no mechanism for a third party to step in to help sort out any such disagreement at a preliminary stage. DPH does not have the budgetary resources to hire outside reviewers for all disputed cases, and there is currently no formal way for a hospital to engage an independent reviewer as part of the oversight process. The only option now available for a hospital to contest a disputed deficiency finding is through the formal hearing and administrative review which is time consuming and expensive.

SB 969 would create a mechanism for engaging an impartial reviewer during the DPH oversight process. The reviewer would be selected jointly by DPH and the hospital, with the costs to be paid by the hospital. The expected outcome of this new process will be improved care, better cooperation, and more efficient use of resources that are better spent on patient care and effective oversight.

We urge you to pass SB 969. Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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

JDI:pae