



**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, March 5, 2013**

**SB 1026, An Act Concerning An Adequate Provider Network To Ensure Positive  
Health Outcomes For Low Income Residents**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 1026, An Act Concerning An Adequate Provider Network To Ensure Positive Health Outcomes For Low Income Residents**. CHA supports the bill.

Connecticut hospitals play a critical role in the health and quality of life of our communities. They provide care to all people regardless of their ability to pay. Connecticut hospitals are the ultimate safety net providers, and their doors are always open.

Every day, healthcare professionals in hospitals see the consequences and health implications for individuals and families who lack access to care and coverage. Emergency departments are filled with individuals who cannot find a physician to care for them because they are uninsured or underinsured – or they are Medicaid beneficiaries and few physicians will accept the low rates paid by Medicaid. Throughout Connecticut, our emergency rooms are treating both those who have delayed seeking treatment because of inadequate or no coverage, and those who have no other place to receive care.

Thus, as frontline caregivers, Connecticut hospitals are absolutely committed to initiatives that improve access to safe, high-quality care and expand access to coverage. Connecticut hospitals stand ready to partner on Medicaid system reform and innovation to create effective solutions that offer a win for everyone: better access for patients, lower costs for the state, and better payments for providers. The ultimate goal is to establish a healthcare system through which coverage is affordable and sustainable, and access to care is guaranteed.

HB 1026 establishes a commission to study obstacles to achieving an adequate healthcare provider network for Medicaid recipients. The commission would recommend strategies to improve access to such providers and health outcomes for recipients across racial and ethnic lines. It would put forth strategies to improve provider networks which focus on, but are not limited to, reducing administrative burdens, providing provider education concerning provision of care to Medicaid recipients, and increasing Medicaid rates of reimbursement to such providers. The establishment of the commission is timely and important as the Medicaid program is under significant stress due to prolonged budget reductions, which have negatively impacted providers and the Department of Social Services.

The bill is especially welcomed by hospitals in light of the proposed biennial budget, which makes significant reductions to hospital funding—cutting more than \$550 MILLION in the next biennium. These cuts will devastate hospitals. They will cause immediate and lasting damage to Connecticut’s health and human services safety net—affecting patients, employees, and every community in the state.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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