



**TESTIMONY OF
THE CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Friday, March 15, 2013**

**HB 6393, An Act Concerning The Professional Standard Of Care For
Emergency Medical Care Providers**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to present testimony concerning **HB 6393, An Act Concerning The Professional Standard Of Care For Emergency Medical Care Providers**. CHA supports this bill.

Connecticut's hospitals are more than facts and figures, and dollars and cents. Hospitals, at their core, are all about people. All of our lives have, in some way, been touched by a hospital: through the birth of a child, a life saved by prompt action in an emergency room, or the compassionate end-of-life care for someone we love. Or perhaps our son, daughter, husband, wife, or friend works for, or is a volunteer at, a Connecticut hospital.

Hospitals 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.

As frontline caregivers, Connecticut hospitals are absolutely committed to initiatives that improve access to safe, high-quality care and expand access to coverage.

Currently, rising medical liability insurance costs have resulted in funds being diverted from patient care and quality improvement, and a reduction in the number and availability of physicians in specialty service areas. It has additionally compromised the ability of hospitals to ensure on-call and emergency department coverage. Connecticut hospitals treat more than 1.6 million patients in their emergency departments each year.

HB 6393 increases the burden of proof to clear and convincing evidence in medical malpractice actions involving care and treatment provided in a hospital emergency department. If adopted, this measure will move Connecticut toward increased protection for the providers of emergency services, and will help guarantee that patients in need of such services will continue to receive appropriate and high quality medical care.

CHA appreciates this Committee's interest in exploring all possible solutions to reducing Connecticut's medical malpractice costs, which may in turn reduce healthcare costs.

Protecting the general public's continued access to quality healthcare when and where they need it continues to be the most important reason for enacting effective and expedient reforms as outlined in HB 6393.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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