



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

SB 892, An Act Concerning Cost Estimates For Certain Health Care Services

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 892, An Act Concerning Cost Estimates For Certain Health Care Services**. CHA opposes the bill.

SB 892 seeks to require that all healthcare providers give patients notice, prior to care, of the cost of services if the services are expected to exceed \$1,000. The bill applies to all types of healthcare providers, including hospitals.

It would be nearly, if not totally, impossible to comply with the bill's requirements in hospital emergency departments for two reasons. First, SB 892's mandate would conflict with a healthcare provider's obligations under federal law. The federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) – sometimes called the anti-dumping law – prohibits hospitals from engaging in financial or billing-related practices that might delay emergency screening and stabilizing care. Additionally, EMTALA prohibits hospitals from taking any actions that would have the effect of discouraging a patient from obtaining care, including emphasizing potential financial barriers and obligations that may result from the care. Second, in emergency care, it is virtually impossible to pre-determine the expected cost of services that will be rendered.

For other care settings, it would still be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to comply with SB 892's requirements because instant access to insurance coverage information is not available to healthcare providers. While there are various pre-authorization processes for many carriers and types of services, these do not provide a full picture of what the patient's eventual costs will be.

Lastly, patient care needs are often fluid. For many types of treatment, particularly for surgery and hospital inpatient care, it is impossible to anticipate all of the medications, procedures, and other costs involved during an episode of care.

For these reasons, we oppose passage of SB 892.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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