



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Monday, March 17, 2014**

SB 437, An Act Concerning Licensure For Genetic Counselors

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 437, An Act Concerning Licensure For Genetic Counselors**. CHA supports the general goal of the bill, but has some concerns with the bill as currently drafted.

Before commenting on the bill, it's important to detail the critical role hospitals play in the health and quality of life of our communities. 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 treat everyone who comes through their doors 24 hours a day, regardless of ability to pay. In 2012, Connecticut hospitals provided nearly \$225 million in free services for those who could not afford to pay.

Connecticut hospitals are committed to initiatives that improve access to safe, equitable, high-quality care. Generations of Connecticut families have trusted Connecticut hospitals to provide care we can count on.

With respect to SB 437, genetic counselors provide information and support to families who have members with birth defects or genetic disorders and families who may be at risk for a variety of inherited conditions. These counselors identify families at risk, interpret information about disorders, analyze inheritance patterns and risks of recurrence, and review available options with the individual/family. CHA supports statutory recognition of genetic counselors, but understands that as currently drafted, the bill would result in unintended consequences that would restrict current genetic counselors from performing the vital role they play in the in the delivery services in hospitals and other settings.

CHA respectfully requests to work with the Committee and interested parties as part of the process of refining the language of SB 437 to best reflect the current and anticipated future practice of genetic counseling.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.