



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2015**

**HB 5444, An Act Concerning The Treatment Of Persons With
Psychiatric Disabilities**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5444, An Act Concerning The Treatment Of Persons With Psychiatric Disabilities**.

Before commenting on the bill, it's important to point out that Connecticut hospitals treat everyone who comes through their doors 24 hours a day, regardless of ability to pay.

This is a time of unprecedented change in healthcare, and Connecticut hospitals are leading the charge to transform the way care is provided. They are focused on providing safe, accessible, equitable, affordable, patient-centered care for all, and they are finding innovative solutions to integrate and coordinate care to better serve their patients and communities.

HB 5444 seeks to ensure that providers have the critically important patient information necessary to treat patients with psychiatric conditions and the resources to create meaningful discharge plans by changing Section 17a-542 of the Connecticut General Statutes. CHA fully supports those goals, but to accomplish the bill's purpose, various other state statutes would also need to be amended.

There are a variety of state laws that protect privacy and confidentiality of patient information. Unfortunately, these laws are found in many chapters and areas of law, which creates significant confusion for both patients and providers. We believe that to achieve the bill's goals, amendments will be needed to Chapter 899 of the Connecticut General States and, more specifically, to Sections 52-146c through 52-146i.

We agree that state confidentiality law changes must be consistent with HIPAA, but note that the state laws in Chapter 899, not HIPAA, are the barrier to better provider communication in mental health treatment.

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