



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Friday, February 10, 2017**

**PROPOSED HB 5384, An Act Raising The Legal Age For Purchase And Use Of
Tobacco Products**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **Proposed HB 5384, An Act Raising The Legal Age For Purchase And Use Of Tobacco Products**. CHA supports this bill.

Before commenting on the bill, it's important to point out that Connecticut hospitals provide high quality care for everyone, regardless of ability to pay. Connecticut hospitals are finding innovative solutions to integrate and coordinate care to better serve patients and communities, as well as achieve health equity. These dynamic, complex organizations are working to build a healthier Connecticut. That means building a healthy economy, community, and healthcare system. By investing in the future of Connecticut's healthcare and hospitals, rather than continuing to cut away at them, we will strengthen our economy, put communities to work, and deliver affordable care that Connecticut families deserve.

HB 5384 would raise the legal age to purchase and use tobacco products to 21. As a member of the Mobilize Against Tobacco for Connecticut's Health (MATCH) Coalition and a leader in promoting health, CHA sees the value in increasing the barriers to smoking. People between the ages of 18 and 21 are more likely to experiment with tobacco and use it daily. Easy exposure to tobacco products at young ages leads to lifetime nicotine habits and, consequently, poor health. Connecticut has long led the fight against tobacco use, and raising the legal age to purchase or use tobacco is the next logical step in preventing tobacco-related illness and death.

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