



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Friday, February 17, 2017**

**HB 6483, An Act Establishing A Task Force Regarding The Impending
Shortage In The Psychiatry Workforce**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6483, An Act Establishing A Task Force Regarding The Impending Shortage In The Psychiatry Workforce**. CHA supports the 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.

CHA asks to include on the task force hospital representatives involved in psychiatry, human resources, and workforce development. Connecticut hospitals are already experiencing a moderate to severe shortage of psychiatrists. Several Connecticut hospitals have open positions for qualified psychiatrists. While these positions remain unfilled, hospitals must resort to hiring locums tenens psychiatrists, who fill these positions on a temporary basis for a range of a few days to up to six months or more. These arrangements are an expensive short-term solution that hospitals and other healthcare providers use to preserve access to care for patients with behavioral health disorders. Hospitals would prefer to hire full-time psychiatrists with longer-term commitments to serving the hospital, the community, and patients in need of care.

The shortage of psychiatrists is manifesting itself in other ways. At present, there are only eleven psychiatrists on the List of Physicians and Psychiatrists Conducting Competency Examinations for Civil Commitments. This is placing an intolerable burden on applicants for civil commitments, which are often hospitals, as well as on our probate courts. CHA urges the adoption of this bill and offers to assist the task force in developing recommendations to address this shortage.

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