



**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, March 24, 2021**

**HB 5677, An Act Concerning The Availability Of Community Violence Prevention Services Under Medicaid**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5677, An Act Concerning The Availability Of Community Violence Prevention Services Under Medicaid**. CHA supports the bill.

Since early 2020, Connecticut's hospitals and health systems have been at the center of the state's response to the current global public health emergency. Hospitals expanded critical care capacity, staffed to meet unprecedented patient need, deployed community COVID-19 testing locations, and are now playing a key role in the administration of vaccines. Through it all, hospitals and health systems have continued to provide high-quality care for everyone, regardless of ability to pay.

HB 5677 would make community violence prevention services provided by a qualified violence prevention professional (VPP) a covered service under the Medicaid program, and establish state agency approval of programs to train and certify such professionals.

Connecticut hospitals have been collaborating with community partners for years to advance trauma-informed case management services to victims of violence, with the common goals of starting the healing process, supporting victims and their families, and preventing further violence. Hospital-based initiatives in Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport have focused on the needs of those who have suffered physical assault injuries (e.g., gunshots, stabbings, and blunt trauma) and sexual assault, as well as on those victims of human trafficking. These efforts and related work in other states led to the establishment of a national hospital violence intervention program (HVIP), coordinated by the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI), which provides training and certification for VPPs.

VPPs often make an initial connection with victims while they are still in the hospital. They are available to victims and their families to coordinate victim assistance services under the Victims of Crime Act, connect victims with mental health services, including brief trauma-focused therapy, coordinate post-discharge medical follow-up for the treatment of injuries, connect victims with opportunities for employment and educational advancement, and coordinate referrals to community-based services for food, clothing, and legal advocacy. VPPs are also adept at addressing the risk of retribution in the hours and days after an incident.

Under the bill, a VPP would need to complete a nationally accredited certification program approved by the Department of Public Health and at least six months of full-time equivalent experience providing community violence prevention services through employment, volunteer work, or as part of an internship experience. The bill also includes an annual requirement of at least four hours of continuing education in the field of community violence prevention services.

HB 5677 will establish a unified, consistent, and sustainable statewide process for Connecticut hospitals, government agencies, and community-based violence intervention programs to deliver targeted case management services to victims of violence and their families. This coordinated approach will also enable these partners to generate, share, and benefit from evidence-based data to develop best practices.

For these reasons, CHA and Connecticut hospitals support the bill.

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