



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 9, 2021**

**HB 6447, An Act Creating The Covered Connecticut Program To
Expand Access To Affordable Health Care**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6447, An Act Creating The Covered Connecticut Program To Expand Access To Affordable Health Care.**

Every day, Connecticut hospitals and caregivers see how the lack of health insurance prevents people from getting the right care, at the right time, in the right place. Hospitals support helping people get health coverage to better ensure their access to essential medical and behavioral health services, and have long assisted patients with getting access to coverage for which they are eligible. We know that access to affordable health insurance, which fairly and equitably reimburses healthcare providers for the cost of the services provided, is essential to building a healthier Connecticut.

We appreciate that HB 6447 builds on the important investments that have already been made to expand access to health insurance coverage while avoiding policies that would undermine the commercial health insurance market. Recognizing that affordability is key to coverage, CHA supports the policies within the legislation to:

- Expand subsidies to working families who find the cost of health insurance coverage just out of reach
- Explore how to make Exchange-based coverage more affordable through creation of a reinsurance program
- Partner with the federal government to bring down the cost of Exchange-based coverage in our state
- Consider expansion of Medicaid coverage where necessary

We also support the important focus on the impact of rising drug costs on families, employers, and healthcare providers. As a 2019 report by the American Hospital Association showed, average total drug spending per hospital admission increased 18.5 percent between fiscal years 2015 and 2017.¹ Such increases are unsustainable and if we are to lower the trajectory of healthcare spending in our state, addressing drug prices will be critical.

Finally, HB 6447 imposes a new assessment on health insurers and organizations such as hospitals that administer self-insured plans. It appears this assessment would be imposed on every self-insured employer, including hospitals. Since early 2020, Connecticut's hospitals and health systems have been at the center of the global public health emergency, acting as the critical partner in the state's response to COVID-19. Hospitals expanded critical care capacity, stood up countless community COVID-19 testing locations, and are an essential component of the vaccine distribution plan. Through it all, hospitals and health systems have continued to provide high-quality care for everyone, regardless of ability to pay. This is not the time to increase costs for hospitals. Given the important role hospitals are playing to overcome COVID-19, we ask that you specifically exclude from this assessment hospitals that administer a self-insured plan.

Hospitals and health systems are committed to improving the affordability of health coverage for our patients. Building off our success in expanding coverage over the last ten years, we believe this legislation includes important advancement in that ongoing work

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

¹ <https://www.aha.org/system/files/2019-01/aha-drug-pricing-study-report-01152019.pdf>