



**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
Monday, February 8, 2021**

**SB 326, An Act Prohibiting The Sale Of Flavored Cigarettes, Tobacco Products,  
Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems And Vapor Products**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 326, An Act Prohibiting The Sale Of Flavored Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems And Vapor Products**. CHA supports this bill.

Before commenting on this bill, it is important to acknowledge that, 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 a critical 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 tireless commitment to the COVID-19 response confirms the value of strong hospitals in Connecticut's public health infrastructure and economy and reinforces the need for a strong partnership between the state and hospitals.

In 2019, under the leadership of this Committee, the state of Connecticut passed a law that raised the legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. CHA and its member hospitals were supportive of that proposal and commend the General Assembly and the Governor for their leadership on that issue. Similarly, CHA looks forward to working with state policymakers to ensure that any proposed tobacco-control bill achieves the goals of improving the health and well-being of Connecticut residents, while ensuring that there are no unintended consequences to healthcare providers or patients.

We know that the best way to reduce health-associated harm caused by smoking is to abstain from smoking altogether or, at a minimum, delay the start of smoking. We also know that added flavoring in tobacco products entices more users and makes an otherwise objectionable taste more palatable and enjoyable<sup>1</sup>. Flavored tobacco products can appeal to youths and young adults and influence the initiation and establishment of tobacco-use patterns<sup>2</sup>. To that

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration. *Menthol and Other Flavors in Tobacco Products* (<https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/products-ingredients-components/menthol-and-other-flavors-tobacco-products#reference>) accessed 2-16-20.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2014–2018; *Weekly* / October 4, 2019 / 68(39);839–844 (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6839a2.htm>) accessed 2-16-20.

end, we support the goal to ban the sale of these products and look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of this important public health policy initiative.

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