



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

**SB 683, An Act Concerning Hospital Billing And Collection Efforts By Hospitals
And Collection Agencies**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 683, An Act Concerning Hospital Billing And Collection Efforts By Hospitals And Collection Agencies**.

Guided by their mission of caring for patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of patients' ability to pay, Connecticut hospitals have a long tradition of providing charity care and financial assistance to patients in need.

SB 683 proposes to limit the amount a hospital may collect from an individual who is insured under a high deductible health plan (HDHP), and restrict the manner in which a hospital may collect unpaid bills for healthcare services provided. These proposed changes do not reflect the recommendations of a recent task force on HDHPs, are unfairly focused on hospitals, and create new financial restrictions that will unduly impede a hospital's ability to achieve its mission of caring.

The imposition of high-deductible payments through the use of HDHPs is on the rise in Connecticut and across the country. In 2019, the General Assembly established a task force to analyze the impact of HDHPs on consumers. Over the course of several months, task force members conducted a detailed review of HDHPs. In February 2020, the task force issued its report and recommendations noting that the task force heard how high deductibles prevent people from getting the healthcare services that they need

Nowhere among the recommendations did the task force propose to limit the amount a hospital may collect from an individual who is insured under an HDHP or prescribe the manner in which a hospital collects on unpaid medical bills. On the contrary, while the report did acknowledge that for a certain segment of the population HDHP deductibles may lead to unmanageable medical debt, it did not see the solution as hospital focused.

We encourage additional review of the task force's report. For example, on February 16, 2021 the Insurance and Real Estate Committee raised "An Act Implementing Recommendations of the High Deductible Task Force." Last week the Committee heard SB 1049, An Act Concerning

High Deductible Health Plans, which provides for calculating deductibles on a calendar-year basis. This will simplify those deductibles for consumers, and is an important first step.

CHA is committed to sustaining and improving access to high quality healthcare services across our state. We appreciate that affordability is central to that commitment and every actor in the system, i.e., provider, payer, pharmaceutical and device manufacturer, employer, and government, has an important role to play in this work. Unfortunately, this legislation will not put our state on a path to address affordability in our healthcare system.

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