



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 3, 2021**

SB 847, An Act Concerning Newborn Infant Health Screening

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 847, An Act Concerning Newborn Infant Health Screening**. CHA supports the bill with slight modification.

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.

There are a number of critically important timeframes involved in the newborn screening sample collection and submission process performed by hospitals and the blood sample testing process performed *only* by the Department of Public Health (DPH) lab. Samples, except for certain seriously ill or premature newborns, are collected by hospitals between 24 and 48 hours after birth. After appropriate drying time, a necessary step to ensure the samples are readable, collected samples are sent to the DPH lab. The current regulations require the samples to be submitted to the lab within 48 hours of physical collection. The national recommendations for best practices call for the lab to test the samples upon receipt and report the results within two days. SB 847 covers only a portion of these key timeframes, and we encourage the Committee to consider the additional changes noted below.

An essential component of the newborn screening process is the timely processing of samples by the state lab. It is our understanding that while the DPH lab currently arranges to test newborn screening samples over the weekend and on holidays, this has not always been the case.

Past practice of the DPH lab allowed for samples delivered on a Friday afternoon or on weekends or holidays to be placed on shelves and not logged in or processed until the next official business day. As a result, the true date of delivery was not reflected in the MAVEN system, which is used to track newborn screening in Connecticut.

We believe timely testing is critical to appropriate healthcare response and treatment. As such, we request that language be added to the bill to require the DPH lab to promptly log in, process, and test the newborn screening samples received at the lab in a timely manner. In addition, we suggest such language also require that the DPH lab establish an operational solution that would allow it to track, accept, and test samples each day of the week, including weekends and holidays.

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