

**TESTIMONY OF THE
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 1, 2022**

**HB 5224, An Act Concerning Standards For Interpreters For Deaf,
Deafblind And Hard Of Hearing Persons**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5224, An Act Concerning Standards For Interpreters For Deaf, Deafblind And Hard Of Hearing Persons**. CHA supports this bill.

Since early 2020, hospitals and health systems have been at the center of Connecticut's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, acting as a vital partner with the state and our communities. Hospitals expanded critical care capacity, procured essential equipment and supplies, and stood up countless community COVID-19 testing locations. Hospitals have been an essential component of the statewide vaccine distribution plan including efforts to reach and serve historically under-resourced communities disproportionately affected by the virus.

HB 5224 requires: (1) the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) to maintain and regularly update a list of registered interpreters on its website, categorized by interpreter settings for which they are qualified, (2) ADS to establish an Internet web page containing information about services for deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing individuals, including, but not limited to, services provided by ADS and the Departments of Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services and Children and Families. Each such department is then required to place a link to the Internet web page established by ADS on their respective websites, (3) the recognition of credentials of interpreters if listed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and (4) penalties for individuals who inaccurately present themselves as a registered interpreter.

Throughout the fall, CHA participated on the Human Services Committee Work Group Concerning Issues Affecting Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind Persons. HB 5224 reflects some of the issues identified and solutions discussed by the work group. Importantly, HB 5224 will provide consistent information among the various state agencies on services available to the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind persons. It will also recognize appropriately credentialed professionals as listed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. We are hopeful that this will increase the number of available interpreters in Connecticut, who are needed badly to fill gaps in our existing interpreter pool.

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