



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

HB 5272, An Act Concerning Menstrual Products

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5272, An Act Concerning Menstrual Products**. CHA supports the 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. 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 the well-being of our communities and reinforces the need for a strong partnership between the state and hospitals.

HB 5272 requires: (1) staff at York Correctional facility to provide menstrual products for free to satisfy the healthcare needs of inmates; (2) local and regional boards of education to provide free menstrual products in restrooms that are accessible to students in middle school and high school; (3) public institutions of higher education to provide free menstrual products in no fewer than one designated and accessible central location on campus, and (4) shelters receiving a grant through the Department of Housing to provide free menstrual products to the shelter's residents.

CHA strongly supports HB 5272 to provide menstrual products in various settings. CHA recognizes recent research demonstrating that an insufficient supply of menstrual products is not only a health-related issue, but also an economic issue. For example, a 2021 study demonstrated that more than one-third (38%) of low-income people with periods reported missing work, school, or similar activities due to lack of access to menstrual supplies. Increasing access to menstrual supplies could make it easier for a person to go to work or school and thus could aid in advancing economic mobility, a key driver of population and community health.

CHA, with the full participation of Connecticut's 27 acute care hospitals, is partnering with the Diaper Bank of Connecticut and the Connecticut Department of Housing to address basic needs such as diapers and menstrual products for Connecticut residents. Increasing the availability of menstrual products and other basic material needs, such as diapers, supports a person's engagement in employment, education, and broader social activities that all promote health across the lifespan.

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