



**TESTIMONY OF THE
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Monday, March 7, 2022**

SB 89, An Act Concerning Surgical Smoke

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 89, An Act Concerning Surgical Smoke**.

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.

SB 89 requires each hospital and outpatient surgical facility to develop a policy for the use of a surgical smoke evacuation system to prevent exposure to surgical smoke. We support the goal of preventing exposure to surgical smoke. In fact, hospitals in Connecticut have made great strides in purchasing and implementing smoke evacuation systems.

If the Committee decides to take action on SB 89, we respectfully request two changes to the bill.

With hospitals and healthcare providers still working in response to the pandemic, we respectfully request changes to certain effective dates. Specifically, we request that the requirement for hospitals to develop a smoke evacuation policy be changed to January 1, 2024 and implementation to October 1, 2024.

Second, we request the Committee delete the requirement that hospitals and outpatient surgical centers provide the Department of Public Health (DPH) with copies of their policies and that DPH create a report related to such submissions. We believe this is unnecessary. Throughout the Connecticut General Statutes hospitals are required to adopt policies related to a variety of issues. DPH is aware of the many statutory requirements for hospitals and upon survey and inspection it verifies compliance.

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