



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 9, 2023**

HB 5001, An Act Concerning Resources And Support Services For Persons With An Intellectual Or Developmental Disability

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5001, An Act Concerning Resources And Support Services For Persons With An Intellectual Or Developmental Disability**. CHA supports the legislation, particularly Section 11.

Connecticut hospitals continue to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and are now facing new challenges of treating sicker patients than they saw before the pandemic, with a dedicated but smaller workforce who are exemplary but exhausted. They are also experiencing significant financial hardships brought on by record inflation. Through it all, hospitals have been steadfast, providing high-quality care for everyone who walks through their doors, regardless of ability to pay.

HB 5001 makes important improvements and investments in the state programs developed to support individuals with disabilities, and in particular, those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. CHA supports these important investments and would like to highlight our support for the work authorized in Section 11 of the bill that invests in training, education, hiring, and retaining behavioral health and health and human services providers.

Healthcare workers in Connecticut have been exceptional in responding to the pandemic and all of its impacts over the last three years. But it has taken a toll on them – adding more stress, leading to exhaustion and burnout. Challenges that existed before the pandemic have been exacerbated. Through it all, they have maintained exceptional care for patients.

As we continue to respond to the effects of the pandemic and its impact over the last three years and look to build the future healthcare delivery system in our state, we know that we need to expand Connecticut's healthcare workforce.

Connecticut hospitals are working every day to support their workers and are on the forefront of creating new ways to keep hospital workers resilient and enhance retention and recruitment. Providing financial incentives, identifying opportunities for career advancement, and supporting continuing education are important ways hospitals are supporting the

workforce. Additionally, hospitals are partnering with colleges and technical schools to develop curriculum and training to support future healthcare needs and identifying the clinical placements that will be needed to support this enhanced training.

We have also built a strong partnership with the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), working together to support initiatives to rapidly retrain Connecticut workers for jobs in healthcare (CareerConneCT), create regional sector partnerships to enhance collaboration in communities across the state, develop healthcare career pathways for high school students, and influence the development of the CT Health Horizons program.

We must maintain our progress in supporting and growing the healthcare workforce. Section 11 of HB 5001 would help us maintain that momentum by investing in the creation of a Behavioral Health and Human Services Career Pipeline, identifying the barriers in hiring and retaining behavioral health and human services providers and creating partnerships with education to reduce those barriers, and creating a strategic workforce plan to identify the conditions and funding necessary to support a robust behavioral health and human services workforce.

We look forward to continuing to work together to support our state's healthcare workforce and expand it for the future.

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