



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

**HB 6659, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, And Making Appropriations Therefor**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6659, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, And Making Appropriations Therefor.**

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 6659 provides for 11 new positions in the Office of Health Strategy (OHS). Specifically, HB 6659 provides for:

- Two new positions to provide analytical support for OHS
- Three new positions to implement recommendations in the 5-Year Statewide Health IT Plan
- Five new positions to implement the Governor's proposal to create the program to cap out-of-network costs
- One position to monitor CON settlement compliance regarding settlement conditions such as cost controls, patient access, and detailed reporting.

For years, starting pre-pandemic, hospitals and health systems advocated for changes to the Certificate of Need (CON) program in OHS because the process is unworkably slow, not enough staff are assigned to assess or review applications, and decisions and determinations can be literally years behind what the law contemplates. This interferes with the ability of providers to meet patient need and innovate. It also inhibits provider ability (and state agencies) to budget, obtain loans and bonding, or to perform necessary planning and development to adjust to patient and community needs.

We have implored OHS repeatedly to improve the CON process by simply meeting their own statutory timelines and deadlines. CON applications should not take years to process.

Before OHS seeks additional staff to broaden the Office's work, it is paramount that they have the staff to accomplish the work currently assigned. We urge the Committee to allocate more positions, or reallocate the newly designated positions, to the CON program to ensure that it efficiently and effectively accomplishes one of its most important functions.

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