



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Monday, February 26, 2024**

HB 5197, An Act Concerning Social Workers

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5197, An Act Concerning Social Workers**. CHA supports the bill.

Connecticut hospitals are critical to their communities. They are confronting the challenges posed by a post-pandemic healthcare system with an exemplary healthcare workforce that continues to provide outstanding care. But challenges remain. Hospitals are treating sicker patients, it continues to be challenging to hire and retain staff, and the financial headwinds are grave. Through it all, hospitals are steadfast, providing high-quality 24-hour care for everyone who walks through their doors, focusing on making Connecticut's healthcare system more equitable, and driving world-class innovation right here in Connecticut.

HB 5197 builds on the past legislative work that moved Connecticut in the direction of participation in interstate compacts. Participation in licensure compacts is one tool to address workforce shortage issues. Participation in licensure compacts must be coupled with other steps to improve the education pipeline, support workforce retention and recruitment, and improve opportunities for career advancement. Should the Committee move forward with this licensure compact, CHA urges the Committee to address any state agency resource issues to ensure that background checks can be made in a timely manner so that there is no delay in licensure for social workers who are important behavioral health providers.

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