



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 6, 2024**

HB 5322, An Act Concerning The Distribution Of Educational Materials Regarding Intimate Partner Violence Toward Pregnant And Postpartum Patients

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5322, An Act Concerning The Distribution Of Educational Materials Regarding Intimate Partner Violence Toward Pregnant And Postpartum Patients**. CHA offers recommendations to assist in achieving the goals of 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 5322 adds to the list of materials that the state's maternal mortality review committee (MMRC) is required to produce for eventual distribution by hospitals and certain community practitioners to their patients who are pregnant or postpartum.

Specifically, by January 1, 2025, the MMRC must create educational materials on "intimate partner violence toward pregnant and postpartum persons." The Department of Public Health (DPH) is tasked with taking the MMRC-created materials and giving them "in print to each birthing hospital in the state, and electronically to obstetricians and other health care providers who practice obstetrics for provision to pregnant and postpartum patients."

HB 5322 also mandates that, beginning January 1, 2025, every birthing hospital must "provide to each pregnant and postpartum patient the educational materials regarding intimate partner violence toward pregnant and postpartum persons."

CHA asks that the Committee make five changes to HB 5322 to increase the success of reaching all patients who need these educational materials in a timely and meaningful manner.

1. The MMRC or DPH should be required to include not only education about how to recognize signs of intimate partner violence (IPV) and where to seek help, but also specific locations and contact information for IPV resources (e.g., how to contact Safe Connect).
2. There should be time between when DPH provides the materials and when hospitals must provide the materials to patients. As written, those obligations could start on the same day a hospital receives the materials, which is an unrealistic expectation. Hospitals should be allowed 30 days after DPH supplies the materials within which to implement a distribution processes (and make the corresponding changes to their portals) if the materials are provided after December 1, 2024.
3. CHA appreciates that DPH will provide printed copies of the materials. CHA also recommends that hospitals should have the option to provide the materials through electronic means if that is determined to be more effective for patients than a paper copy.
4. Current law only requires “birthing hospitals” to provide patients with these important educational materials. The new facility category of “birth center” should be added as a type of provider that must deliver MMRC-created materials (intimate partner violence and the other topics required by existing law) to all pregnant and postpartum patients.
5. The underlying law requires each hospital to have a portal that posts information and resources for patients. CHA appreciates the concept, but DPH or another state agency would be the better steward of that information and better able to assist patients. CHA asks that the bill be revised to assign the patient information resource obligation to a state entity or a chosen community organization.

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