

**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, February 7, 2005**

SB 52, An Act Concerning Restrictions On Motor Vehicle Operators Sixteen Or Seventeen Years Of Age During The First Three Months Following Licensure

SB 152, An Act Concerning Restrictions On Sixteen Or Seventeen Year Old Motor Vehicle Operators

SB 825, An Act Concerning Motor Vehicles Driven By Minors

HB 5053, An Act Concerning Restrictions On Sixteen And Seventeen Year Old Motor Vehicle Operators

HB 5446, An Act Concerning Additional Training And Restrictions For Drivers Under The Age Of Eighteen

HB 5467, An Act Concerning Amendment Of The Graduated Motor Vehicle Operator's License Provisions

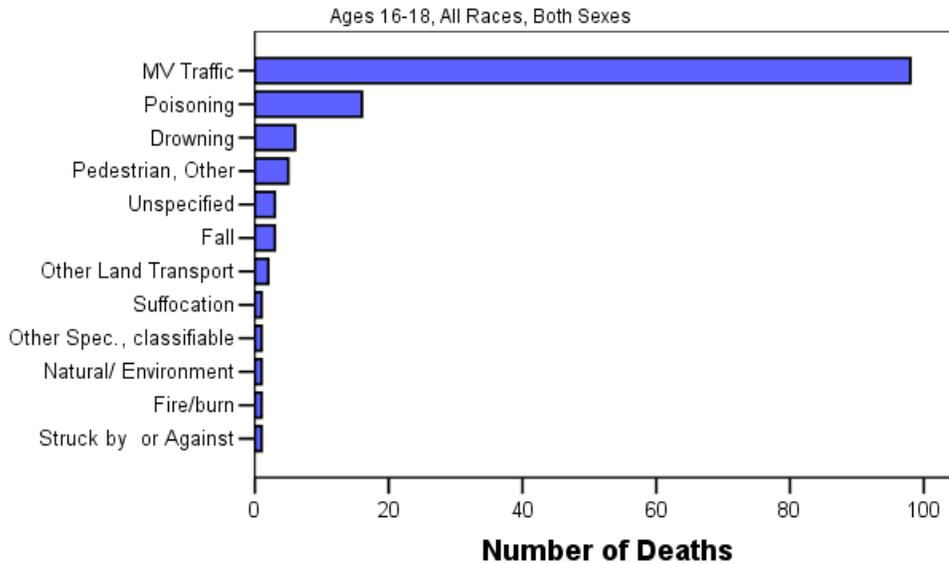
HB 5862, An Act Requiring Training For Youthful Drivers

CHA appreciates the opportunity to testify on the above-mentioned bills.

CHA supported the enactment of Connecticut's graduated license program, which imposes limitations on motor vehicle operators who are sixteen and seventeen years of age. There is a mounting body of evidence that suggests that Graduated Driver's License programs are an effective strategy to help meet the formidable challenge of protecting teenage drivers. A review of studies evaluating the experiences of states that have enacted such a system suggests that Connecticut could expect a reduction in fatal and non-fatal injuries among 16-18 year-olds of between 20 and 44 percent. CHA testified in 2003 that based on these studies should Connecticut enact a graduated driver's license program, the state can expect to save the lives of eight 16-18 year-olds every year and prevent injury to an additional 2,611.

In Connecticut in 2002 (the latest year for which information is available), motor vehicle accidents were the leading cause of unintentional death among residents 16-18 years old, accounting for 71 % of all deaths due to unintentional injury in this age group.

Deaths From Unintentional Injury and Adverse Effects, Connecticut, 1999-2002



Data Source: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

Studies show that imposing certain restrictions on teenage drivers results in a significant decrease in the number of fatalities and injuries. As caregivers of those involved in motor vehicle accidents, hospitals know all too well the large number of fatalities and injuries caused by motor vehicle operators who are sixteen and seventeen years of age. Emergency department staff struggle everyday to save the lives of patients injured in car accidents, and hospitals see this bill as a significant step toward reducing the number of injuries and deaths resulting from motor vehicle accidents.

For these reasons, CHA strongly urges the Committee when reviewing any proposal to change Connecticut's graduated driver's license program to ensure that it maintains a program that continues to protect teenage drivers.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.

JDI:pas