



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING
Thursday, February 23, 2006**

HB 5092, An Act Concerning The Admission And Care Of Patients In Nursing Homes

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony related to **HB 5092, An Act Concerning The Admission And Care Of Patients In Nursing Homes**. HB 5092 proposes to increase the level of scrutiny given to mentally ill patients before they can be admitted to a nursing facility by requiring the nursing facility to make a written determination that it has the appropriate resources required to care for the patient.

CHA is committed to all patients receiving care in the appropriate setting and it is essential for nursing facilities to evaluate whether they will be able to meet the unique needs of each patient prior to admission. We appreciate the ongoing efforts this Committee has made to facilitate thorough patient evaluations. CHA is concerned, however, that the proposed legislation may have the unintended effect of creating substantially increased delays in transferring hospitalized patients to nursing homes.

Each year Connecticut hospitals discharge thousands of patients to nursing homes, including many patients with common psychiatric diagnoses. Both federal law and current Connecticut law require multi-level screenings relating to mental health status prior to admission to nursing homes, and this process already results in significant delays in transferring patients. Delays in processing the required screenings result in patients unnecessarily staying in hospitals, which impairs the ability of the hospitals to admit and treat new patients, especially in their overcrowded emergency departments. If the proposed legislation further delays transfers of patients from hospitals to appropriate nursing home placements, it would result in many patients with psychiatric conditions having extended stays in hospitals, even though hospital care is no longer medically necessary or appropriate.

CHA urges this Committee to improve the mechanisms already in place for the processing of all psychiatric patient screenings before adding any additional steps to the system and welcomes the opportunity to work with the Legislature and the appropriate state agencies to accomplish this goal. Should the Committee move forward with requiring nursing homes to make written admission determinations for each patient, we encourage the Committee to amend the bill to require preadmission screenings and nursing facility written determinations to be completed on an expedited basis.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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