



**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, March 1, 2005**

**HB 6790, An Act Implementing The Recommendations Of The Legislative Program  
Review And Investigations Committee Relative To The Medicaid Eligibility  
Determination Process**

The Connecticut Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 6790, An Act Implementing The Recommendations Of The Legislative Program Review And Investigations Committee Relative To The Medicaid Eligibility Determination Process**. HB 6790 would implement the recommendations of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee relative to the Medicaid eligibility determination process.

In particular, HB 6790 would require the Department of Social Services (DSS) to expedite applications for enrollment with a particular emphasis on pregnant women, grant presumptive eligibility for kids, and allow for enrollment through the internet.

Connecticut hospitals are facing a series of daunting fiscal challenges, including inadequate reimbursement from the Medicare and Medicaid programs, a severe shortage of healthcare workers, escalating pharmaceutical costs, blood and blood product price increases, and skyrocketing medical and general liability premiums. In addition, our hospitals must continue to expend their limited resources on disaster and emergency planning at unprecedented levels and deal with an ever increasing uninsured population.

These and other pressures have put Connecticut's hospitals in a financially tenuous position. In 2003, 28 of the state's 31 acute care hospitals ended the year unable to collect enough funds to cover the cost of care delivered to those patients, resulting in operating losses for nearly a third of the state's hospitals.

Connecticut's hospitals support the efforts outlined in HB 6790 because they would ease and speed the process to becoming insured. The financial health of Connecticut's hospitals requires more, not fewer, individuals becoming insured. CHA urges you to vote in favor of HB 6790 because it will assist hospitals in their ability to continue to serve as the state's healthcare safety net for all those needing care, regardless of their ability to pay.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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