



**TESTIMONY  
OF  
CAROLYN BRADY  
VICE PRESIDENT, PATIENT CARE AND REGULATORY SERVICES  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
Friday, February 15, 2002**

**SB 92, An Act Concerning Zoning Requirements For Residents With  
Psychiatric Disabilities**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) supports **SB 92, An Act Concerning Zoning Requirements For Residents With Psychiatric Disabilities** which would ensure that houses in which up to six Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) clients are receiving residential care or support services are treated as single family residences for zoning purposes. Similar homes in which Department of Mental Retardation clients or children with mental or physical disabilities receive treatment are already considered to be single family residences for zoning purposes.

CHA supports any efforts to facilitate recovery of patients with mental illness and to promote access to mental health care at all levels of service. The mental health system is currently in gridlock, in part due to inadequate transitional placements and community support services for individuals in need of mental health care.

Connecticut hospitals have an essential role in the care of persons with mental illness but are not designed to serve as the entire continuum of mental health care. Hospital emergency rooms are the common destination of mental health patients in crisis. Although hospitals can effectively stabilize patients in crisis, once the patients are discharged, the lack of appropriate community supports prevents patients from continuing their recovery process. Instead, many patients begin to deteriorate and, when they cannot access subacute treatment and community services, the patients quickly return in a crisis situation to the emergency department.

CHA believes that SB 92 will improve the mental health system by removing zoning barriers to the development of additional residential care centers for adults with mental illness. This bill is one of many steps that the State of Connecticut should undertake in order to rehabilitate the Connecticut mental health system. CHA and our members remain committed to working together toward making mental health services available at all levels of care and promoting recovery of persons with mental illness. We are prepared to work with the Legislature and the appropriate state agencies in any way that is helpful to improve the mental health system.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.