



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2023

**CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION ADVOCATES FOR POLICIES TO GROW HEALTHCARE
WORKFORCE AMID CRITICAL SHORTAGE**

CHA Submits Testimony Ahead of Public Hearing on Workforce Development

WALLINGFORD – Ahead of today’s [public hearing](#) focused on workforce development across the state, the **Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA)** submitted [testimony](#) to the **General Assembly’s Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee** advocating for policies to address the state’s **critical healthcare workforce shortage**.

Connecticut’s alarming shortage of healthcare workers comes in the wake of unprecedented pandemic-related demands, and as the workforce ages and retires. Connecticut healthcare workers are also facing new challenges of treating sicker patients than they saw before the pandemic, with a dedicated but smaller workforce who are exemplary but exhausted.

“Healthcare workers in Connecticut have been exceptional in responding to the pandemic and all of its impacts over the last three years. But it has taken a toll on them – adding more stress, leading to exhaustion and burnout. Challenges that existed before the pandemic have been exacerbated. Through it all, they have maintained exceptional care for patients,” the **Connecticut Hospital Association** stated in their testimony. “As we continue to respond to the effects of the pandemic and its impact over the last three years and look to build the future healthcare delivery system in our state, we know that we need to expand Connecticut’s healthcare workforce. As hospitals confront significant financial headwinds brought on by record inflation and exacerbated by the need to hire temporary, contract labor, a partnership with the state to support the workforce is now more important than ever.”

CHA submitted testimony in support of three bills:

- HB 5438, legislation to create a **debt-free college program** for certain workers, including many in healthcare (CHA requested that hospital employees be added as beneficiaries of the legislation).
- HB 5441, legislation to create a **student-loan forgiveness program** for graduates of higher education who pursue careers in healthcare.
- SB 936, legislation requiring the Board of Regents for Higher Education to conduct a study regarding **workforce development issues** in the state.

- more -

Background:

- The American Hospital Association has estimated the **nationwide shortage of nurses at 1.1 million** and significant shortages in many healthcare professions from medical lab workers to paramedics.^[1]
- According to the Governor's Workforce Council, Connecticut will need **3,000 new nurses** every year but the number of new nursing school graduates per year is **only 1,900**.^[2]
- Investing in our healthcare workforce supports families, communities, and economic growth. For every hospital job, another is generated outside the hospital. In total, Connecticut's hospitals and health systems generated **over 229,000 jobs** inside and outside hospitals in our state in 2021, for a **total payroll of \$18.9 billion**.
- Connecticut hospitals have been creating new ways to **enhance retention and recruitment** by identifying opportunities for career advancement, providing financial incentives, supporting continuing education, partnering with colleges and technical schools to develop curriculum and training to support future healthcare needs, investing in safety improvements and training, and identifying the clinical placements that will be needed to support enhanced training.
- Connecticut hospitals are building strong partnerships with the **Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS)**, including through the **CareerConneCT** training and employment pathway program, regional sector partnerships, developing healthcare career pathways for high school students, and supporting the **CT Health Horizons** program – a product of the work of the General Assembly completed during its last session to support the future nursing and behavioral health workforce in the state.

[Click here](#) to learn more about solutions to address the critical healthcare workforce shortage.

[Click here](#) to read CHA's testimony.

###

MEDIA CONTACT:

Nicole Rall
(203) 294-7213 (office)
(860) 992-7571 (cell)
rall@chime.org

^[1] <https://www.aha.org/lettercomment/2022-03-01-aha-provides-information-congress-re-challenges-facing-americas-health>

^[2] <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/News/20201028-Governors-Workforce-Council-Strategic-Plan.pdf>