



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 23, 2021**

**HB 6473, An Act Expanding The Diaper Bank To Include
Feminine Hygiene Products**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6473, An Act Expanding The Diaper Bank To Include Feminine Hygiene Products**. CHA supports the bill.

HB 6473 expands the Diaper Bank to include feminine hygiene products.

Feminine hygiene products are products that women (and all individuals who menstruate, without regard to their gender identity) primarily use for the physiologically normal act of menstruation. Menstruation usually begins for women in their early teens and continues until menopause, which for most women is in their forties or fifties. Feminine hygiene products are a big business. The global market for feminine hygiene supplies is almost 21 billion dollars¹. The average tampon product cost was \$5.99 in 2018 (most recent data available²) and the average external pad product cost \$4.45.

Multiply the cost times multiple menstrual periods a year and the cost of feminine hygiene products is insurmountable for many lower-income women. In a journal article in *Obstetrics and Gynecology* published in 2019, surveying almost 200 lower-income women, 64% of women were unable to afford feminine hygiene supplies. Because women had to choose between feminine hygiene products and food,³ it qualifies as a social determinant of health for these women, limiting their ability to function normally for several days a month, every month.

Neither the federal Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nor Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cover feminine hygiene supplies, and only through the recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act were feminine hygiene supplies finally covered by healthcare spending

¹ <https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports/feminine-hygiene-product-market-69114569.html>

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/378647/us-feminine-hygiene-products-average-price-per-unit-by-category/>

³ Sebert Kuhlmann A, Peters Bergquist E, Danjoint D, Wall LL. Unmet Menstrual Hygiene Needs Among Low-Income Women. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2019 Feb;133(2):238-244. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000003060. PMID: 30633137.

accounts, an option not available to the un- or underemployed. Connecticut abolished the tax on feminine hygiene products in 2018.

CHA supports allowing feminine hygiene products to be financially supported and available through the Connecticut Diaper Bank. By taking this step, the legislature can advance access to feminine hygiene products for lower-income women.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.