



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 22, 2023**

**HB 6914, An Act Concerning The Use Of Funds In The Opioid
And Tobacco Settlement Funds And Funds Received By The State As
Part Of Any Settlement Agreement With A Manufacturer Of
Electronic Nicotine Delivery System And Vapor Products**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6914, An Act Concerning The Use Of Funds In The Opioid And Tobacco Settlement Funds And Funds Received By The State As Part Of Any Settlement Agreement With A Manufacturer Of Electronic Nicotine Delivery System And Vapor Products**. CHA supports this bill.

Connecticut hospitals continue to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and are now facing new challenges of treating sicker patients than they saw before the pandemic, with a dedicated but smaller workforce who are exemplary but exhausted. They are also experiencing significant financial hardships brought on by record inflation. Through it all, hospitals have been steadfast, providing high-quality care for everyone who walks through their doors, regardless of ability to pay.

HB 6914 would make various revisions to the statutes concerning the use of funds received from opioid and tobacco settlement agreements. Specifically, HB 6914 would direct expenditures from the “JUUL Settlement” and the Tobacco Trust Fund to be used to support evidence-based best practices focused on reducing smoking and tobacco use activities in persons under the age of 21. Further, HB 6914 would require any municipality that receives moneys directly from an opioid settlement to submit an annual report detailing its expenditures for the duration in which they expend such funds.

CHA has long supported strong tobacco control measures that seek to promote the mitigation, cessation, reduction, and prevention of the use of tobacco and nicotine products. On a daily basis, caregivers in Connecticut hospitals see firsthand the impact of tobacco and nicotine-related disease and illness and, because of this, we wholeheartedly endorse common sense public policy initiatives, such as HB 6914.

CHA remains committed to collaborating with the state to combat the opioid epidemic. As an example, CHA is presently supporting the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) by providing educational services to providers and other clinical staff related to the causes of opioid use disorder and associated therapeutics, pursuant to the Parents Recovering from Opioid Use Disorder (PROUD) grant.

Other measures taken by hospitals and health systems include supporting continuing education programs for prescribers, deploying recovery coaches in emergency departments (EDs), supplying naloxone kits to first responders, as well as to patients and their loved ones, incorporating opioid awareness into clinical integrated-care programs, sponsoring community awareness and education programs, screening and enrolling patients in treatment programs for opioid dependence, and partnering with the CHA Connecticut Perinatal Quality Collaborative to improve the health, equity, and quality of care for mothers and infants, including those affected by opioid-use disorder.

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