



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 15, 2023**

SB 1197, An Act Concerning Workforce Development

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 1197, An Act Concerning Workforce Development**. CHA supports the legislation.

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.

SB 1197 proposes to create and emphasize education and training opportunities for high school students with an eye toward preparing these students for future employment opportunities or additional education in high-demand fields, like healthcare. CHA supports these important investments and would like to highlight our support for the work authorized in Section 2 of the bill that invests in training and education to support future employment in high-demand healthcare fields.

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.

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.

Connecticut hospitals are working every day to support their workers and are on the forefront of creating new ways to keep hospital workers resilient and enhance retention and recruitment. Providing financial incentives, identifying opportunities for career advancement, and supporting continuing education are important ways hospitals are supporting the

workforce. Additionally, hospitals are partnering with colleges and technical schools to develop curriculum and training to support future healthcare needs and identifying the clinical placements that will be needed to support this enhanced training.

We have also built a strong partnership with the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), working together to support initiatives to rapidly retrain Connecticut workers for jobs in healthcare (CareerConneCT), create regional sector partnerships to enhance collaboration in communities across the state, develop healthcare career pathways for high school students, and influence the development of the CT Health Horizons program.

We must maintain our progress in supporting and growing the healthcare workforce. Section 2 of SB 1197 would help us maintain that momentum by investing in the establishment of dual enrollment or early college programs to provide students with courses and training that are required to pursue occupations in healthcare. We appreciate and support that the legislation focuses on preparing students for careers that span the spectrum of opportunities in healthcare, such as radiation technologists, ultrasound technologists, and nursing aides.

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