

**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 1, 2023**

SB 899, An Act Concerning Title Protection For Physicians

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 899, An Act Concerning Title Protection For Physicians**. CHA is opposed to the bill as drafted as it is not aligned with existing statutory provisions.

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.

Currently, Connecticut law, section 53-341 of the general statutes, provides for the protection of the title “physician” in the penal code (last revised in 2013 to classify the offense as a Class D felony).

Specifically, section 53-341, states in relevant portion that:

no person engaged in the practice of any branch of the art of healing the sick or injured or professing to be engaged in such practice, other than a person who is licensed to practice medicine under the provisions of chapter 370, may use or imply the use of the words “physician”, “surgeon”, “medical doctor”, “osteopath” or “doctor”, or the initials “M.D.”, “D.O.” or “Dr.”, or any similar title or description of services, with the intent to represent, or in a manner that is likely to induce the belief that, the person (1) practices medicine within the state, (2) is licensed to practice medicine within the state, or (3) may diagnose or treat any injury, deformity, ailment or disease, actual or imaginary, of another person for compensation, gain or reward.

SB 899 chiefly seeks to prohibit specific misuse of the title “physician” or the use of any initials associated with such title that represents to the public that such person is licensed, registered or otherwise authorized to practice medicine or surgery, or (2) advertise services under the description of “physician.”

It is unclear how SB 899 would enhance protection of the title physician beyond that protection found in section 53-341 and what the unintended legal consequences of creating an additional law would be.

CHA is not aware of circumstances or concerns that are not addressed by section 53-341. If such circumstances have occurred, we welcome the opportunity to discuss with the committee and other stakeholders how to clarify the law in a manner that does not confuse providers or patients, or interfere with the state's ability to prosecute the unauthorized practice of medicine.

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