



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

**HB 5045, AN ACT REQUIRING HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS TO DISPLAY
PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION BADGES DURING WORKING HOURS**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5045, An Act Requiring Health Care Providers To Display Photographic Identification Badges During Working Hours**. CHA does not support this bill as written.

HB 5045 would require healthcare providers who work for, or on behalf of, a facility or institution, to wear photographic identification badges when providing direct patient care during working hours. CHA recognizes the value of identifying personnel who are treating patients and agrees with the need for security in the healthcare workplace. But the mandated use of identification badges with particular information in the hospital setting is far more complex than it may seem.

The Joint Commission, which currently accredits all acute care hospitals in Connecticut, has standards that require hospitals to have policies for implementation of identification methods in the facility. To conform with The Joint Commission standards, hospitals already have robust systems for identification, including badges, to maintain or improve patient safety and the work environment. Each hospital in Connecticut employs thousands of workers who are required to wear badges. Replacing all of their badges with a Connecticut-specific standard issue badge, would be an unnecessary cost and would draw resources away from direct patient care

In addition, key areas of patient safety in hospitals are affected by the details and protocols for identification badges. For example, there are circumstances when wearing an identification badge would be at odds with proper infection prevention techniques that must be followed for certain surgeries and special procedures.

Finally, important workplace protections are also affected. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has advised, through its Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care & Social Service Workers (OSHA Publication 3148, 2004), that identification badges should not contain full names, because it has been shown to increase the potential for workplace violence against healthcare providers, particularly in mental health settings.

In order to preserve the purpose of the bill, but avoid any confusion regarding the information to be listed on the badges, or the rules required to maintain a safe environment; and to avoid unnecessary costs to hospitals; we request that a new subsection be added to the bill as follows:

Subsection (c): A hospital shall be deemed in compliance with the provisions of this act if it is in compliance with The Joint Commission's identification standards.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.

JDI:pae