



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 14, 2023**

SB 1175, An Act Concerning Medical Assistance

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 1175, An Act Concerning Medical Assistance**. 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.

SB 1175 requires that the Commissioner of Social Services study and report on the efficacy of the state medical assistance program and make recommendations on opportunities to streamline eligibility determinations to ensure eligible persons are enrolled and maintain eligibility.

We support this bill's focus on ensuring that the state optimize methods for enabling eligible persons to enroll in Medicaid and to maintain such enrollment without interruption. We recognize that loss of coverage, even on a temporary basis, can interfere with ongoing participation in preventive care and chronic care management and strain the resources of hospitals and other providers that step forward to cover the cost of care during these periods of interrupted coverage. We believe the bill should also include methods for streamlining and optimizing enrollment in no cost and subsidized coverage available through Access Health Connecticut, including the Covered Connecticut Program.

We believe the legislature should also require that the state address near-term opportunities to achieve the above goals and require the adoption of special measures to avoid a disruption of coverage during the pandemic unwinding, when hundreds of thousands of individuals' eligibility for Medicaid will be subject to redetermination. One such opportunity includes automatically enrolling individuals who no longer qualify for Medicaid and who have

qualifying incomes in the Covered Connecticut Program. Additionally, for disenrolled Medicaid members eligible for subsidized coverage on the exchange, the state could effectuate coverage by making a payment for two months of medical premium. Data sharing between programs is not a barrier because Connecticut Medicaid and Access Health Connecticut use an integrated eligibility system that eliminates the need to transfer data between programs.

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