



**TESTIMONY
OF THE
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, March 5, 2002

HB 5623, An Act Concerning Patient Access To Hospital Bills

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on **HB 5623, An Act Concerning Patient Access To Hospital Bills**, a bill that allows patients to obtain a copy of their hospital bills upon request.

CHA does not believe that HB 5623 is needed at this time for several reasons. First, state law already allows patients to obtain copies of their hospital bills upon request. Subsection (b) of section 19a-509 currently requires itemization and section 19a-490b requires copies to be available upon request. Section 19a-509(b) states "All hospitals shall include in their bills to patients, and to third party payors unless previously furnished, an explanation of any items identified by any code or by initials." Section 19a-490b requires that a hospital provide a patient, upon the patient's request, "a copy of the patient's health record, including but not limited to, copies of bills...."

In addition, Federal law requires itemized bill submissions for Medicare services.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the regulations promulgated under the federal Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act, (HIPAA), which are scheduled to become effective April 23, 2003, also contain requirements that providers respond to patients' requests for access to records, including billing statements, within 30 days of the request. The HIPAA requirements apply to all providers and are not limited to government payors.

In light of the existing statutes that already provide for patient access to hospital bills, as well as the additional requirements of HIPAA in this area of the law, it is CHA's position that this bill is unnecessary. It is also the case that HIPAA is likely to have a preemptive impact on certain state statutes regarding privacy and access to patient records. For this reason alone, the bill is premature.

CHA is willing to work with any member of the General Law Committee that has questions on a patient's right to access his or her records.