

**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, February 1, 2005**

**HB 6438, An Act Concerning Restoration Of Husky Plan,  
Part A Benefits For Parents And Needy Caretaker Relatives**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) is submitting this testimony in support of **HB 6438, An Act Concerning Restoration Of Husky Plan, Part A Benefits For Parents And Needy Caretaker Relatives**. HB 6438 allows the approximately 13,000 working parents and needy caretaker relatives above the lowered eligibility level (from 150% to 100% of the federal poverty level, i.e., \$23,507 to \$15,671 for a family of three, respectively) to maintain essential health coverage. Failure to extend this coverage will cause these parents to join the more than 12,000 Connecticut parents already uninsured whose income is below 185% of the federal poverty level. Failing to provide access to health insurance for low-income families only shifts the demands and costs to hospital emergency rooms.

Connecticut hospitals continue to face a series of daunting fiscal challenges, including inadequate reimbursement from the Medicare and Medicaid programs, a \$22 million dollar a year cut in State Administered General Assistance (SAGA) funding, a shortage of healthcare workers, and escalating costs in areas such as pharmaceuticals, blood and blood products, and particularly medical and general liability premiums. In addition, our hospitals must expend their limited resources on quality improvement and facility modernization, advances in new healthcare technology, and disaster and emergency planning programs.

The competing pressures of government funding cuts, the need to attract and maintain a superior workforce, rising input costs, and the continuous effort to improve the care given have put Connecticut's hospitals in a financially tenuous position. In 2004, 22 of the state's 30 acute care hospitals ended the year unable to collect enough funds to cover the cost of care delivered to those patients.

Adding another 13,000 individuals to the ranks of the uninsured risks not only the ability of these individuals to access basic care, but also the ability of hospitals to deliver the care all Connecticut's citizens need, expect, and deserve. Therefore, CHA asks that you support HB 6438, An Act Concerning Restoration Of Husky Plan, Part A Benefits For Parents And Needy Caretaker Relatives.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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