



**TESTIMONY
OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 4, 2003**

SB 569, An Act Concerning Data Maintained By The Office Of Health Care Access

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) opposes **SB 569, An Act Concerning Data Maintained By The Office Of Health Care Access**. As proposed, SB 569 would significantly expand bad debt and free care reporting requirements by causing data to be reported at the account level. The account level data that would be required are: the dollar value of each patient account written off; whether the account was entirely uninsured; whether the account was for a minor; and whether the care was paid for by free care bed funds.

SB 569 does not specify any use for the information. The purpose of the proposed changes is limited to causing hospitals to collect and report the data and OHCA to receive and store it. It is not necessary to use account level detailed information to shape public policy regarding uncompensated care. In addition, it is not appropriate for hospitals to be providing for the public record lists of patients who have not paid all or a portion of their bills, and the disclosure may actually be precluded by the new HIPAA privacy regulations.

Section 19a-662 of the Connecticut General Statutes currently sets forth the requirements with which hospitals are obliged to comply regarding uncompensated care. Section 19a-662 expects hospitals to pursue payment and not engage in inefficient or inappropriate provision of uncompensated care, and failure to comply with Section 19a-662 could result in the loss of DSH funds. In addition, Section 19a-662 calls for submission to OHCA of admitting, billing and collection information, without requiring account level details.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.