



**TESTIMONY
OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Monday, February 10, 2003**

**SB 867, An Act Concerning Alternatives To Incarceration For Persons With
Psychiatric Disabilities**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) supports the intent of **SB 867, An Act Concerning Alternatives To Incarceration For Persons With Psychiatric Disabilities**, which provides alternatives to incarceration for criminal defendants with psychiatric disabilities. Specifically, criminal defendants who are not competent to stand trial may be placed in the custody of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), who will either develop a treatment plan with which the defendant voluntarily agrees to comply or apply for civil commitment of the defendant.

CHA is concerned, however, that in the absence of sufficient appropriations, SB 867 will only further increase the backlog in an already overburdened mental health system. Many patients in need of psychiatric treatment already wait for days or even weeks in hospital emergency departments while the hospitals attempt to find appropriate placements. In order for SB 867 to achieve its goals, it is imperative that funds be allocated to develop additional capacity in the mental health system.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

CCB:pas