

**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 7, 2024**

SB 317, An Act Expanding The Covered Connecticut Program

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 317, An Act Expanding The Covered Connecticut Program**. CHA offers the below comments on the bill.

Connecticut hospitals are critical to their communities. They are confronting the challenges posed by a post-pandemic healthcare system with an exemplary healthcare workforce that continues to provide outstanding care. But challenges remain. Hospitals are treating sicker patients, it continues to be challenging to hire and retain staff, and the financial headwinds are grave. Through it all, hospitals are steadfast, providing high-quality 24-hour care for everyone who walks through their doors, focusing on making Connecticut's healthcare system more equitable, and driving world-class innovation right here in Connecticut.

CHA appreciates that SB 317 seeks to build on the important investments that have already been made to expand access to health insurance coverage. As CHA has consistently argued in the past, as the legislature considers legislation to expand state-operated and subsidized health insurance options, it should do so while avoiding policies that would undermine the commercial health insurance market.

CHA appreciates the interest in further expansion of the Covered Connecticut program for those making more than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) but less than 300% FPL. CHA supports the requirement that the Department of Social Services (DSS) develop a plan for additional review by the legislature prior to moving forward with such expansion. As consideration is given to a broader expansion of the state-backed plan, it is important that a number of factors be considered:

- The impact on the individual health insurance market and consumer options
- The potential impact on employer-sponsored health insurance
- The benefits and cost-sharing associated with the plan

CHA supports the legislature's continued commitment to ensuring Connecticut residents have access to robust, affordable health insurance, and we are eager to continue to add our voice to that work. Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.