Key Priorities

Ensure a Sustainable Healthcare Environment.

This is a time of unprecedented change in healthcare, and Connecticut hospitals are leading the charge to transform the way care is provided. They are focused on providing safe, accessible, equitable, affordable, patient-centered care for all, and they are finding innovative solutions to integrate and coordinate care to better serve their patients and communities. Hospitals are calling for legislators to help us create a sustainable environment for healthcare in Connecticut.

Our Request:
■ Partner with hospitals to focus on achieving a sustainable environment for healthcare in our state and providing high-quality, cost-effective, integrated healthcare for all.
■ Support measures that ensure Connecticut has a regulatory environment that provides hospitals with flexibility to care for people effectively, and in the manner most appropriate for them.
■ Avoid imposing any unfunded mandates or new regulatory requirements on hospitals this session.

Support Patients, Communities, and Hospitals.

Connecticut hospitals are experiencing significant financial stress from existing reductions including the $254 million hospital tax, recent loss of state funding of approximately $30 million per year, reductions in Medicare that will cost Connecticut hospitals more than $2 billion over the next decade, and another half billion in projected cuts due to federal sequestration.

We know the state is facing difficult financial times, but hospitals have already been cut and taxed significantly in recent years. Patients and communities benefit from strong hospitals; further cuts will endanger hospitals, negatively impacting those they serve, those they employ, and their communities.

Our Request:
■ Oppose any further cuts to hospital funding.

Improve the Mental Health System.

Connecticut hospitals are pursuing initiatives to improve behavioral healthcare for children and adults. We are focused on system changes that will improve health outcomes, reduce unnecessary use of emergency department services, and improve adequacy of funding for key safety net services.

We support measures such as Medicaid shared savings initiatives for providers of behavioral health services that will foster improved coordination of care with hospitals and community providers, and generate savings to the state.

We support funding for community care coordination teams that will engage patients in establishing care management plans and connect them with medical, behavioral health, housing, transportation, and other essential services.

Our Request:
■ Support hospitals’ efforts to establish a shared savings program, achieving equitable Medicaid reimbursement, and expanding the behavioral health home model.
■ Support improving access to state resources by requiring transparent health outcomes and quality measures.
■ Support community care teams and related care coordination services.
■ Support efforts to assess and accommodate psychiatric bed need by expanding the availability of intermediate-stay inpatient beds for adults, increasing the number of behavioral health beds for children and adults with longer-term behavioral health disorders, and collaborating with hospitals to determine short- and long-term bed needs.
■ Support improving emergency mobile psychiatric services, in consultation with hospitals to achieve appropriate placements for children in crisis, increase crisis stabilization resources, and implement a psychiatric assessment center.
■ Support a comprehensive statewide strategy involving multi-sector collaboration among physicians, hospitals, and the state to reduce the misuse and abuse of opioids and other prescription drugs in Connecticut.

Our Requests:
■ Support hospitals’ efforts to redesign the Medicaid program with respect to behavioral health services by establishing a shared savings program, achieving equitable Medicaid reimbursement, and expanding the behavioral health home model.
■ Support improving access to state resources by requiring transparent health outcomes and quality measures.
■ Support community care teams and related care coordination services.
■ Support efforts to assess and accommodate psychiatric bed need by expanding the availability of intermediate-stay inpatient beds for adults, increasing the number of behavioral health beds for children and adults with longer-term behavioral health disorders, and collaborating with hospitals to determine short- and long-term bed needs.
■ Support improving emergency mobile psychiatric services, in consultation with hospitals to achieve appropriate placements for children in crisis, increase crisis stabilization resources, and implement a psychiatric assessment center.
■ Support a comprehensive statewide strategy involving multi-sector collaboration among physicians, hospitals, and the state to reduce the misuse and abuse of opioids and other prescription drugs in Connecticut.

Phase Out the Hospital Tax.

The hospital tax costs our hospitals $254 million each year and means providing care with even fewer resources, affecting access and services for all patients. Moreover, at a time when hospitals are trying to reduce the cost of care, this tax adds $123 per year to the cost of care for each patient with commercial insurance. Hospitals provide life-saving care that is essential to patients and communities. Don’t divert hospital funding through taxes to balance the budget.

Our Request:
■ Support hospitals’ efforts to phase out the hospital tax over a five-year period. Phasing out the tax means hospitals can use the funds they earn to invest in infrastructure, including hiring staff, purchasing the latest technology, and supporting programs that ensure they can continue their mission of caring for all.

Continue the Property Tax Exemption for Hospitals, Colleges, and Other Not-for-profits that Support the People in Our Communities.

Not-for-profit Connecticut hospitals are exempt from paying property taxes because they serve a critical purpose — they enhance the health and general welfare of the state’s residents. Additionally, they contribute to and play a major role in improving community health.

Exemption from local property taxes provides necessary and important financial support to not-for-profit hospitals and other not-for-profit organizations, allowing them to pursue their mission of caring. A change to this exemption will make healthcare more expensive.

We understand the financial strain faced by municipalities but do not believe eliminating the tax exemption is the answer. We believe that increasing state funding of the current PILOT program should be a shared priority of cities and towns, hospitals, colleges, legislators, and the Governor.

Our Request:
■ Oppose any legislation that would alter the property tax exemption for not-for-profit hospitals.

Support Medicaid Redesign and Improvement.

Hospitals are working to improve the health and quality of life of the more than 750,000 Connecticut residents on Medicaid. While great progress has been made to modernize the payment system, that progress has been undermined by round after round of taxes and payment cuts. Recently, DSS reduced payments to hospitals by approximately $30 million per year.

Our Requests:
■ Restore funding for physician services delivered to patients admitted to the hospital — funding has been cut in half.
■ Restore funding for ED physician services when a patient is admitted — funding has been eliminated completely.
■ Restore funding for laboratory services — funding has been cut by more than 20%.
About the Connecticut Hospital Association

Founded in 1919, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) represents hospitals and health-related organizations. With more than 140 members, CHA is one of the most respected hospital associations in the nation.

CHA’s mission is to advance the health of individuals and communities by leading, representing, and serving hospitals and healthcare providers across the continuum of care that are accountable to the community and committed to health improvement.

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