



CONNECTICUT
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Thursday, November 19, 2020**

On behalf of Connecticut's hospitals, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) welcomes the opportunity to provide public comments to you today. It is important that the Health IT Advisory Council, as a state entity with a data-focused mission, know that there is a comprehensive system for COVID-19 data collection happening every day across Connecticut's hospitals. Data are collected, sorted, standardized, and reported – literally daily, sometimes more frequently – on both the state and federal level as part of hospitals' ongoing response to COVID-19 and the public health emergency. CHA works closely with the Office of the Governor, the Department of Public Health, and other key agencies to ensure that they have the data they need to protect public health and fight the pandemic. CHA also oversees successful daily federal data reporting to HHS, at an efficiency level that, according to HHS statistics, many other states are unable to meet. While privacy constraints do not allow CHA to report these data publicly, they are aggregated and used in part for the public reporting done by the state and federal government and used for the ongoing emergency response. CHA, along with the Governor's Office and DPH, was able to stand up a comprehensive and coordinated flow of vital hospital information quickly, using hospitals' and CHA's data expertise, just days into the public health emergency. We are extremely proud of this work, and the state should be as well.

The ongoing data work supports better medical care, more efficient acquisition and distribution of therapeutics and other necessary resources, and the state's response planning. Healthcare professionals, epidemiologists, public health experts, and other state leaders who work every day, tirelessly, rely on these data to fight the virus so that we can keep Connecticut safe.

Trust in government institutions and public health systems is critical if we are to defeat the virus. We were disappointed to see misstatements in the news media by some state officials questioning the state's approach to data collection during the pandemic. These statements implied that the lack of a state HIE hampered the

state's COVID response; Connecticut's success in using data to fight the pandemic and flatten the curve demonstrate otherwise. These statements were not made by public health authorities or other government agencies who are involved with COVID-19 data collection and reporting, or who work to fight the pandemic. These statements are disheartening for those who are working to defeat the virus and more importantly, they can mislead the public and undermine public trust in the state response. We urge better care be used when speaking about the pandemic response.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7259.