



**TESTIMONY OF
THE CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION,
THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE AT HOME,
THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES/
CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING,
THE CONNECTICUT STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY, AND
LEADINGAGE CONNECTICUT & RHODE ISLAND,
SUBMITTED TO
THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 12, 2026**

**HB 5421, An Act Establishing An Account To Provide Durable Medical
Equipment To Health Care Facilities**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written public comments regarding funding for durable medical equipment as proposed in **HB 5421, An Act Establishing An Account To Provide Durable Medical Equipment To Health Care Facilities**.

As healthcare leaders from the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA), the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home, the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities/Connecticut Center for Assisted Living (CAHCF/CCAL), the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), and LeadingAge Connecticut & Rhode Island, **we support the provisions of HB 5421**. We believe the intent of HB 5421 is to reduce barriers to acquiring durable medical equipment to make care more accessible to the elderly and persons with disabilities.

In addition to sharing our support, and in order to ensure the intent of the bill is reached, we ask that HB 5421 be amended in two instances: 1) to include physician practices as eligible grant awardees, and 2) to provide clarity as to where the durable medical equipment financed through the bill is to be used.

HB 5421 would appropriate funds and authorize the commissioner of the Department of Public Health to expend \$1 million in grants to healthcare facilities for the purchase of durable medical equipment for elderly persons or persons with disabilities. HB 5421 defines durable medical equipment as wheelchairs, scooters, canes, walkers, crutches, commode chairs, hospital beds, and patient lifts.

This grant program seeks to alleviate the challenges in accessing care the elderly and persons with disabilities face due to mobility and other health conditions. This bill would go a long way toward improving the care experience for countless patients across the continuum of care by making certain durable medical equipment more accessible.

In order to expand access to durable medical equipment through the proposed grant program envisioned in HB 5421, we respectfully ask that **physician practices** (defined as practice locations in Section 19a-490dd) be included as potential grant awardees. Also, we suggest the committee clarify that the durable medical equipment is to be used within a healthcare facility, medical office, *or* during a home health or hospice agency visit. This latter change would ensure that the durable medical equipment procured through the bill's "health care facility durable medical equipment account," would be used to make care more accessible.

Our provider associations have long come together to work on issues of shared interest including patient access and quality of care. Because HB 5421 advances these goals, we urge the committee to support this initiative.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, please contact Karen Buckley (CHA), Tracy Wodatch (Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home), Matt Barrett (CAHCF/CCAL), Layne Gakos (CSMS), and Mag Morelli (LeadingAge Connecticut & Rhode Island).