

April 23, 2021

On behalf of the Connecticut Hospital Association, LeadingAge Connecticut, Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, and Connecticut Association For Healthcare At Home, we are writing about several bills that were reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee this session that propose to make changes to the workers' compensation system in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant financial burden of these bills will negatively impact providers across the entire healthcare system. **We ask that the Legislature consider another remedy.**

In that this is a once-in-a-century global pandemic, we propose that the state establish and administer a fitting program of compensation and benefits related specifically to the pandemic and fund such program through federal COVID-19 relief funds.

Our proposal continues the collaborative approach that Connecticut has taken in response to this global public health emergency, which involved following available and evolving data to implement timely and effective measures while working in partnership across the healthcare field along with the state. This partnership between the public and private sector allowed Connecticut's healthcare system to respond to the pandemic from a position of strength. Healthcare providers expanded capacity, physically restructured themselves, implemented policies to protect our employees, established COVID Recovery Facilities, and opened up COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites, all while aggressively pursuing the best care for COVID-19 patients.

The response of Connecticut's healthcare workforce to the pandemic has been inspiring. They have dedicated their lives, at great personal sacrifice, to the care and well-being of our patients, saving thousands of lives.

As such, we understand the motivation behind ***SB 1002 and HB 6595, An Act Concerning Labor Issues Related To COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment And Other Staffing Matters***, and ***HB 6478, An Act Concerning Workers Compensation***, to ensure that workers who ably served, but were adversely impacted by the pandemic, be justly compensated for losses resulting from their service.

We respectfully urge the General Assembly to continue our collaborative approach to managing pandemic impacts and avoid placing the bulk of the financial burden of these legislative proposals onto healthcare providers who have been at the frontline of the battle to overcome COVID-19. Let us work together to establish a pandemic related recovery fund to assist the workforce who were impacted by the COVID-19 virus.