



Testimony of Hartford HealthCare

Submitted to the Public Health Committee

Monday, March 29th, 2021 regarding

***Section 4 of SB 1083, An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes
and***

***Section 66 of HB 6666, An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Recommendations
Regarding Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes.***

Section 4 of SB 1083

Section 4 of SB 1083, which would require hospital staff to offer to notify “any family member” of a patient, when they offer to notify the patient's physician upon admission to the hospital. We applaud the committee's efforts to ensure patients feel properly supported while undergoing inpatient medical treatment. And we recognize the vital role of families and other support systems in the healing process.

We would recommend that instead of referring to “any family member” that the language in this section be revised to refer to “a designated family member, caregiver or support person.” This language would allow the patient to designate a family member, friend, caregiver or other support person of their choosing to be notified, rather than limiting them to a relative. Designating a single person is most efficient in terms of maintaining patient confidentiality. In addition, the term “support person” is consistent with terminology utilized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and State Department of Public Health with regard to visitor policies during the pandemic.

Section 66 of HB 6666

Section 66 of HB 6666 would eliminate the ability of providers and clinical laboratories to make reportable disease reports to the Department of Public Health via mail or phone. It also allows DPH to levy a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per incident of failure to report, effective on passage. Currently Hartford HealthCare primarily makes these reports to DPH using an online transmittal system. However, DPH is not setup to accept everything online and certain reporting must be completed via fax. We would appreciate clarity as to whether faxes would be considered electronic reporting under the bill, otherwise we would ask that the effective date and penalties be delayed until this issue is resolved.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. For additional information, contact Cara Passaro at cara.passaro@hhchealth.org.

The HHC system includes seven acute care hospitals, the state's most extensive behavioral health network, a physician group, a clinical care organization, a regional home care system, an array of senior care services, and a large physical therapy and rehabilitation network.