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**Testimony before the
Council of the District of Columbia
Committee on Health
FY17/18 Performance Oversight Hearing
for the
Department of Health**

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**Presented by
Jacqueline D. Bowens
President and Chief Executive Officer
February 12, 2018**

Good Afternoon Chairman Gray and members of the Committee on Health, my name is Jacqueline D. Bowens. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer for the District of Columbia Hospital Association (DCHA). I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony at the Department of Health's 2018 Performance Oversight Hearing. As you know, DCHA represents 14 District hospitals and seeks to help improve health care and access to care in the city. Our members employ over 27,000 individuals who are on the front lines delivering high quality health care here in the District.

DCHA, our members, and the Department of Health are central partners in ensuring the healthcare needs of District residents and visitors are met by our hospitals along with our primary care and skilled nursing colleagues. We continue to work successfully and collaboratively with the Department of

Health under the leadership of Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt on issues that range from: certificate of need, the opioid epidemic, quality of care, patient safety, telehealth, emergency preparedness, and licensure.

In 2017 DCHA worked with the Department of Health on an initiative to reduce the availability of sugary beverages and promote healthier options within the District's hospitals. As you know, chronic diseases are a serious problem for District of Columbia residents. As such, the linkage between sugar consumption and chronic disease can no longer be ignored. In doing our part, the Association has removed the availability of sugary-beverages to staff and meeting attendees in our office. Additionally, 13 hospitals have agreed to participate in the initiative which has been renewed for 2018.

Further, last year Department of Health Director, Dr. Nesbitt also participated in DCHA's first Patient Safety Summit.

The Summit provided District hospitals the opportunity to collaborate, share best practices, and network, highlighting their continued commitment to providing safe and high-quality patient care here in the District. We are grateful that Dr. Nesbitt joined us to address the topic of the Intersection of Health Equity, Patient Safety, and Quality. We also appreciate her continued commitment to leveraging best practices to evolve and meet the shifting landscape of the patient safety culture.

On the regulatory side, the Health Regulatory and Licensing Administration (HRLA) is the body responsible for licensing our facilities, various hospital employees, and the collecting of data concerning adverse events in health care facilities. These activities are part of the foundation of our compliance and patient safety efforts and are critically important to the operation of our member hospitals.

DOH visits all health care facilities annually to review their performance and ensure they meet the high standards expected by the Department. The annual inspections by our regulators are incredibly thorough and allow our hospitals to not only regularly review their performance, but also prepare for their Joint Commission Accreditation reviews.

Regarding licensure, DCHA appreciates the Department's support for the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. We also look forward to working with HRLA to continue exploring licensure reciprocity or compacts that can be implemented to streamline the licensing process in other professions. This has the potential to help hospitals recruit more health professionals quicker and ensures access to qualified personnel.

Finally, I want to commend Dr. Nesbitt's approach of ensuring health priorities are considered in all policies across the District. Innovative thinking like this will help create a healthy

population that can thrive from childhood through adulthood.

DCHA looks forward to continuing the collaboration with the

Department to improve access and overall community health

this year, and for the years to come. Our members also

collaborate with the Department and you'll hear more about

those collaborations shortly.

Thank you for allowing us to provide comments on the performance of the Department of Health. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.