



**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit
Providers For the Aging**

To the Human Services Committee

**Presented by Mag Morelli
February 8, 2007**

**In Support of the Long Term Care Continuum
as Proposed in**

Senate Bill 303, An Act Concerning the Operating Expenses of Residential Care Homes

**Senate Bill 382, An Act Concerning an Appropriation to Increase Funding for Elderly
Nutrition Programs**

Senate Bill 384, An Act Increasing Funding for the Home-care Program for the Elderly

**Senate Bill 572, An Act Increasing Reimbursement Rates for Providers of Adult Day Care
Services**

House Bill 5301, An Act Concerning Rates of Payment for Adult Day Care Services

House Bill 5302, An Act Concerning Rates for Home Care Services

House Bill 5662, An Act Concerning Payment Rates to Home Health Care Agencies

House Bill 5663, An Act Increasing Funding for the Home-care For the Elderly Program

House Bill 6277, An Act Increasing Funding for the Elderly Nutrition Programs

CANPFA members serve thousands of people every day through mission-driven, not-for-profit organizations dedicated to providing the services people need, when they need them, in the place they call home. Our members offer the continuum of aging services: assisted living residences, continuing care retirement communities; residential care homes, nursing homes, home and community based services, and senior housing.

Good morning Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and Members of the Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the president of the Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers for the Aging (CANPFA), an organization of over 130 non-profit providers of aging services representing the full continuum of long term care.

CANPFA members believe in the mission of providing people the services they need, when they need them, in the place they call home. We support the state's long term care plan and its goals of balancing the system and providing choice for the individual who is seeking care. And that is why I am here today to testify in support of the bills before you that will strengthen the state's network of home and community based services and move us closer to achieving those goals.

Most of the people CANPFA members serve are in their 70s, 80s and older. They have served their communities well over the years, and they choose to remain in their own homes. They know that the key to their independence is the availability of home and community-based services. Services such as home-delivered and congregate meals are life-lines for older adults who are not able to shop or cook a nutritious meal. Funding

for home health and adult day services must become a priority in order to prevent older adults with chronic medical problems from needing nursing home placement. And we need to invest in our residential care homes that for years have provided an affordable homelike community based alternative for many older adults.

The state must commit to providing a stronger home and community based network of care because it is the right thing to do. And part of that commitment must be a financing plan that will build our community based infrastructure and adequately reimburse our providers. The state cannot and should not assume that we can adequately fund these services by waiting to realize a "savings" through rebalancing. We need to make the investment now and plan for financing in the future to keep up with rising costs of providing quality care. This is an essential element to the success of the long term care plan

I have provided additional written comments on several of the bills and I hope that you will consider CANPFA and our members to be a resource to you as you move forward on these issues. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Mag Morelli, President

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Senate Bill 384, An Act Increasing Funding for the Home-care Program for the Elderly

House Bill 5663, An Act Increasing Funding for the Home-care For the Elderly Program

CANPFA supports increased funding for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly. From the inception of the Home Care Program, the Department of Social Services has documented benefits to all involved: clients receive care in their chosen setting, families get important assistance that enables them to work outside the home, and the state saves money. Anyone who has sought long term care services for themselves or a loved one knows how difficult it is to navigate the system. The value of the Home Care Program for the Elderly is that it provides the guidance and case management that is so vital to individuals and families. This role will become increasingly important as the long term care options grow and diversify.

Senate Bill 572, An Act Increasing Reimbursement Rates for Providers of Adult Day Care Services

House Bill 5301, An Act Concerning Rates of Payment for Adult Day Care Services

CANPFA supports increasing the rate of reimbursement for adult day services. An invaluable community based service, adult day centers provide a full day of care, nursing services and balanced nutrition for their frail elderly clients at a fraction of the cost of a skilled nursing facility. The state recognized the value of adult day services last session and generously provided additional funds to help increase the rate – but unfortunately, the rate of reimbursement has still not caught up to the rising costs of supporting the level of services that a center provides. This is especially true when you take into consideration that the centers are required to provide escorted transportation

within their daily reimbursement rate. We need to continue to invest in this level of service so that it will thrive and grow throughout the state. CANPFA supports an increase in the reimbursement rate to ensure adult day center services remain a viable choice for the elderly in our state.

Senate Bill 382, An Act Concerning an Appropriation to Increase Funding for Elderly Nutrition Programs

House Bill 6277, An Act Increasing Funding for the Elderly Nutrition Programs

CANPFA supports increased funding for elderly nutrition programs. Often overlooked, ensuring appropriate nutritional intake is an extremely important element to helping older adults remain at home in the community. As adults age, they may become unmotivated or unable to shop for or prepare nutritionally balanced meals for themselves. If they suffer from confusion, they may forget to eat. The resulting poor nutrition poses a serious threat with far-ranging implications for medication absorption, skin integrity and overall health. Therefore we encourage your continued support of adequate funding for elderly nutrition as a key component of our community based network of elderly services.

Senate Bill 303, An Act Concerning the Operating Expenses of Residential Care Homes

CANPFA strongly supports increased funding for residential care homes. Residential care homes are licensed residential care facilities that provide a unique combination of housing and personalized supportive services that are funded through supplemental state income sources. Residents in these homes require some assistance, but they do not need the skilled medical care provided by a nursing facility. They are an affordable, community based option for many older adults. Unfortunately, residential care homes are at risk due to the rising cost of operations and the limited reimbursement from the state.

Residential care homes have been in existence for many, many years and are a valuable link in our continuum of care that we must preserve. Without these homes, many of the residents would move to a much more expensive nursing facility because there is no affordable level of supportive care similar to the care provided by a residential care home. Not only is such a move more expensive for the state, it is undesirable for the resident.

House Bill 5302, An Act Concerning Rates for Home Care Services

House Bill 5662, An Act Concerning Payment Rates to Home Health Care Agencies

CANPFA supports the initiatives to increase the reimbursement rate for home care services. At the heart of home and community based service, home care services need to be supported and encouraged. We need to build the capacity and encourage health care providers to enter the field.