



# State of Connecticut

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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***Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky in Support of PHB 5663, AN ACT  
INCREASING FUNDING FOR THE HOME-CARE FOR THE ELDERLY  
PROGRAM***

**Before the Human Services Committee      Feb. 8, 2007 9:30 a.m. Rm. 2A**

Thank you for hearing this bill. The financial difficulties of my local Visiting Nurse Association of Wallingford, Inc. (VNA) came to my attention in late 2006. Looking over their budget information, it became clear that the chief reason for their shortfall is the significant gap between the true cost of home health aide services to homebound elderly and the reimbursement rate paid for such services by Medicaid. Wallingford's VNA suffered a \$300,000 hit mainly because of this discrepancy in Medicaid payments as well as inadequate payments for homemaker services, which account for about 20% of the shortfall. This \$300,000 represents a 45% shortfall in the VNA's budget.

The VNA is the first responder to the needs of homebound elderly when their families must be at work. For the state budget and state taxpayers, home care is the fiscally conservative alternative to nursing home placement, and of course is far more humane and desirable to the elderly clients themselves, who above all wish to remain in their own homes.

This shortfall in reimbursement places the survival of VNA at risk, and the potential elimination of VNA puts the frail elderly at risk who depend on these visits to remain safe and healthy. Please recommend an increase in Medicaid payments for home health services (at least a cost of living adjustment) as well as an increase in the Connecticut Home Care for Elders Program, which supports the homemaker needs of these homebound elderly. Thank you for your interest in this issue.