

alzheimer's association™

the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer



Statement by
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Chairman, Public Policy Committee
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Human Services Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Public Hearing, March 8, 2007

Re: Raised Bill No.7279 (An Act Concerning the Administration Of The Money Follows The Person Program)

The Connecticut Alzheimer's Association supports the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration program, but wish to comment on a shortcoming of the legislation that affects our constituency. The program is designed to reduce state reliance on institutional care, while developing community-based long term care opportunities for anyone on Medicaid living in nursing facilities, chronic care, intermediate facilities or institutions for mental disease. The program also includes assisted living facilities as a qualified residence.

However, there is a requirement in the federal law that a person in order to be eligible for this program must be living in those facilities for six months. Alzheimer's disease is progressive and ultimately a fatal disease. Our main effort as an association is to provide support services and advocate good public policy that will keep that person out of an institutional setting as long as possible.

This program assists people who are already institutionalized, but with Alzheimer's patients the probability of leaving institutional care is quite small. Given that approximately 70% of nursing homes residents have some form of dementia and that 60% of residents in assisted living facilities also have some form of dementia, the impact of this legislation on those populations will be minimal.

We urge you to consider advocating changes in federal law that would allow community-based long-term care services before patients are institutionalized and not just after they have been admitted. The cost savings to taxpayers and improvements in quality of life for patients are self evident. Should we not consider keeping that person at home as long as possible and provide community-based long term care opportunities before they enter a nursing home? "Money Follows the Person" does not allow this. As a result many people who might otherwise benefit from this program cannot do so. We ask that their needs also be considered.

Thank you.