

Testimony of New England Home Care
To the Human Services Committee
Regarding HB 5664
An Act Concerning Payment to Home Health Care Agencies and Homemaker-Home Health Aide Agencies

Hello Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and members of the Human Services committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of New England Home Care in support of bill 5664.

New England Home Care works with their specialized nurses and paraprofessionals to provide quality home care to patients throughout Connecticut, and currently has a significant population requiring psychiatric care services as well as basic medical care. It is an accredited home health care agency that has home care professionals available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They work to ensure thorough nurse training, case management services, back-office support and optimum care.

New England Home Care has assisted in the creation of this bill and we firmly believe it is necessary to enable employees of our company to adequately serve our patients. We would like you to know that after consulting with others in our industry, we felt the language required some fine tuning. Given this, we have included a copy of the language we feel most accurately elucidates our needs. It is important that you know that the goal of this language is to ensure that as we deliver the dual services of psychiatric care and medical care to our patients requiring such services under one nursing visit, the complexity of such a visit is recognized and therefore adequately reimbursed.

We work with a highly fragile population, the most severe of whom are diagnosed with both psychiatric disorders as well as multiple medical diagnoses. In order to serve such a population, we ask that we obtain reimbursement which will assure us the resources to serve them in the best way that we can. We want nothing more than to provide our patients with the highest possible care, and hope that you will consider this legislation which will enable us to do so. Thank you.

The commissioner of social services shall not construe a visit as limited to the administration of medication when the patient has one or more active medical conditions requiring the attention of a nurse and/or has a diagnosis of a serious and persistent mental illness which requires the interventions of a skilled mental health nurse. Such interventions may include but shall not be limited to psychoeducation, cognitive behavioral therapy and the teaching of symptom management techniques such as the management of delusions and hallucinations.