

**Testimony on SB 562  
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I am here today to testify on raised Bill 562 "An Act Concerning Increased Access To The Medicaid Program For the Medically Needed Elderly and Disabled". My Center is completely in favor of this bill and it is long overdue.

People who are Elderly and/or Disabled, who clearly are in need of Medicaid services are being denied full access to the program. This is because of the different and more stringent income and asset standards used to determine eligibility. The result is the people who are elderly and/or disabled end up not being accepted, or as is usually the case, they are accepted and placed on what is an unreasonable spend down. It is unreasonable because in some cases, people are being told that they must expend \$1,000, \$2,000, and even \$4,000 dollars on medical services and drugs out of pocket before they become eligible again. This is almost ridiculous when you realize that some of these folks have incomes of less than \$1,000 per month. Thus, they are faced with a choice of paying for medical services out of pocket and not paying the rent, utilities, or buying food or paying those bills and not having access to medical care that they need.

Another reason why you should pass 562 is that under the current spend down system, the State Agencies; community non-profits such as the Centers for Independent Living, and the residency coordinators at our public housing agencies are incurring a tremendous burden in trying to help people to understand - let alone - meet the spend down requirements. Many of our seniors and people with disabilities simply cannot understand the spend down, and are not able to do the record keeping, paperwork, and other things to keep up with the spend down. If you pass this legislation, we will all save much time, money, and effort because many more folks will not face a spend down situation.

Thank you for hearing us today.