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

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

Submitted to the Committee on Public Health

In support of

Senate Bill 246, An Act Establishing a loan Forgiveness Program for Historically Underrepresented Students Pursuing Careers in Nursing

Senate Bill 283, An Act Concerning the Availability of Hospice Services under the Medicaid Program

House Bill 5542, An Act Concerning the Use of Telemedicine to Promote Efficiency in the Delivery of Health Care Services

February 29, 2008

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.

Senate Bill 246, An Act Establishing a loan Forgiveness Program for Historically Underrepresented Students Pursuing Careers in Nursing

In recognition of the ongoing effort to address the nursing shortage, CANPFA supports this proposal aimed at encouraging underrepresented students to pursue careers in nursing. The nursing profession is a calling and there are many special young people who are attracting to this work, but are unable to afford the training. Programs like this will help provide the funding necessary and will offer an opportunity for more worthy candidates to pursue nursing careers.

Senate Bill 283, An Act Concerning the Availability of Hospice Services under the Medicaid Program

CANPFA supports the establishment of a Medicaid hospice benefit that will help to ensure the delivery of quality end of life care for all older adults. We applaud the effort to add this benefit to the Medicaid program.

House Bill 5542, An Act Concerning the Use of Telemedicine to Promote Efficiency in the Delivery of Health Care Services

The Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers (CANPFA) supports the efforts of the Committee on Public Health to move the state forward in the area of health care technology. It is a national priority of our affiliate organization, the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) and their Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST), to lead the national charge to develop and deploy technologies that can improve the aging experience in America. This includes technologies to manage health care information as well as technologies to improve the management of personal health care needs.

New technology solutions offer great promise to improve the quality of care while reducing healthcare costs. Technology already has transformed our lives – from email to handhelds and from electronic commerce to cell phones. It is time now for technology to transform the experience of aging. And equally as important, technological solutions need to be integrated into people's daily lives. As important as high-tech hospitals, we need technology in the home that allows citizens to confer with their medical professional or voluntarily share data on a real-time, continuous basis, rather than once every six months at an office visit.

Our current system is designed for treatment rather than prevention. Current healthcare policy – perhaps understandably – has been about case-by-case *problem solving* – dealing with limited resources and diverse and competing interest groups. The 21st century goal for senior healthcare should be about *solution seeking* – empowering consumers, lowering fixed costs and bringing together *all* healthcare actors into a consensus-reaching process on the future of healthcare policy. This is why passage of this type of forward thinking legislation is so important.

We thank you for allowing us to comment on these bills and look forward to working with you.

Respectfully submitted,
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