



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

Presented to the Human Services Committee

March 4, 2008

Regarding

Senate Bill 558, An Act Concerning the Availability of Hospice Services Under the Medicaid Program

Senate Bill 559, An Act Concerning a Pilot Program for Small House Nursing Homes

Senate Bill 561, An Act Concerning the Money Follows the Person Project and Establishment of a Long-term Care Trust Fund

Senate Bill 563, An Act Concerning Expansion of Assisted Living Services and Adult Care Options

Senate Bill 567, An Act Concerning the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly

House Bill 5791, An Act Concerning a Single Point of Entry for Long-term Care

House Bill 5793, An Act Concerning Grants for Respite Care Services for Caretakers of Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease

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.

Good morning Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and members of the Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the president of the Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers for the Aging (CANPFA), an organization of over 130 non-profit providers of aging services representing the full continuum of long term care, including skilled nursing facilities and continuing care retirement communities.

Senate Bill 558, An Act Concerning the Availability of Hospice Services Under the Medicaid Program

CANPFA supports the effort to amend the Medicaid state plan to include hospice as a covered service. We support all efforts to provide quality end of life care to older adults.

Senate Bill 559, An Act Concerning a Pilot Program for Small House Nursing Homes

CANPFA supports this bill which is a laudable step toward shaping the future of nursing home care in Connecticut. This bill looks beyond the current nursing home moratorium to propose a pilot of new buildings and programs similar to what is commonly known as the Greenhouse Project—a system of small self-contained residences each serving as home for ten residents and providing a nursing-home level of care.

The Greenhouse Project is in the forefront of the nursing home “culture change movement.” Culture change moves nursing homes toward a resident centered structure of care with a goal of resembling “home” in every way. In small houses and other nursing homes that have adopted culture change, outcomes show that residents are more satisfied, families are more involved and staff appear more satisfied and committed.

This bill recognizes the fact that the nursing home infrastructure in Connecticut is dated and aging. It is time for the state to begin considering a process of renovation and rebuilding and this idea of encouraging the small house model and emphasizing energy efficiency is an excellent start. We are concerned though, that these ten new pilot nursing home facilities would not only be exempt from the moratorium, but they would also be exempt from any certificate of need process. Instead of a certificate of need, the bill grants the commissioner complete authority to develop the guidelines and criteria for the grants. But nowhere does the bill require that the grant process take into consideration the regional bed need or the concerns of competing nursing home providers. While we support this proposal, we would ask that additional conditions be placed on the grant process to require an assessment of need and a process to consider the concerns of established nursing home providers in the service area.

Senate Bill 561, An Act Concerning the Money Follows the Person Project and Establishment of a Long-term Care Trust Fund

CANPFA is supportive of the Money Follows the Person Project, but we do not feel that we have enough information at this time to be able to comment on the ability of the state to expand the project from seven hundred to five thousand persons. People should be able to receive care in the most appropriate setting and we believe strongly that the state should work not only to assist people in moving from the nursing home to the community, as is the case in the Money Follows the Person Project; but also to help people remain in the community for as long as possible prior to entering a skilled nursing facility.

CANPFA supports the creation of a Long-Term Care Trust Fund to be used as a method of reinvesting and modernizing our system of long term care. As was confirmed through the recent needs assessment, the demand for aging services will only be increasing with time and the state would be wise to consider implementing this type of financing program.

Senate Bill 563, An Concerning Expansion of Assisted Living Services and Adult Care Options

CANPFA is supportive of the concept of expanding the Home Care Program and the Assisted Living Pilot Program to increase the opportunity for lower income older adults to access assisted living services. We do raise the question as to why the bill is defining a new term, "assisted living facility" and what that might mean for the current regulatory structure for assisted living service agencies and managed residential communities.

Senate Bill 567, An Act Concerning the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly

CANPFA is supportive of expanding the Home Care Program to include the option for personal care assistants. We are also very supporting of increasing the reimbursement rates for providers of home and community based services under the Connecticut home-care program. The state must commit to providing a stronger home and community based network of care and part of that commitment must be adequate reimbursement for providers. A strong financial commitment will promote quality, attract new providers and encourage innovation. The state needs to make the investment now and institute annual indexing of rates to ensure that the reimbursement rates keep up with the rising costs of providing quality care.

House Bill 5791, An Act Concerning a Single Point of Entry for Long-term Care

CANPFA supports the concept of a single point of entry for state assistance with long term care needs. Consumers and caregivers need easy access to information on the choices for long term care services, the availability of funding for such services, and the proper assessment of need for such services. A single point of entry can be a valuable tool in the state's effort to provide the right information in a convenient and efficient manner with consumer choice and appropriate level of care the priority.

House Bill 5793, An Act Concerning Grants for Respite Care Services for Caretakers of Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease

CANPFA supports this proposal to increase the maximum grant to families under the respite care services program for Alzheimer's patients. The need to strengthen and support family caregivers is essential. As more long term care is provided at home and in the community, our reliance on family and informal caregivers will continue to grow. We need to recognize these caregivers and provide them with the support and respite that they need.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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