



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGING January 27, 2009

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#### **Senate Bill 454 - An Act Concerning Nursing Home Staffing Levels**

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#### **The Department of Public Health opposes Senate Bill 454**

- This bill mandates that DPH utilize several methods to identify adequate or mandated staffing levels in nursing homes as follows:
  1. Prior to inspection DPH needs to calculate the annual number of hours worked by RNs, LPNs, and CNAs and total patient days for each facility based on DSS's most recent reports, and then transform this information into an average daily staff to patient ratio.
  2. At the time of a DPH inspection, staff shall assess patient care needs and staff ratios based upon staff time measurement studies published by CMS.
  3. If actual hours of care are less than those assessed as needed, the Department will review the facility's methodology.
- The Bill also requires nursing homes to submit quarterly reports when not in compliance with this staffing section.
- The Department supports measures to increase the quality of care provided by health care institutions but suggests that creating a paper maze of calculations will not improve the quality of care and services provided.
- The Department has found that the numbers of staff are less important in furthering quality than are the organization and supervision of care by RNs. Skilled nursing supervision dedicated to the oversight of staff and implementation of care plans developed based upon individual patient assessments enhances quality of care.
- The Department would need a significant increase in professional resources to implement the cumbersome requirements of this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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