



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

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**The Appropriations Committee  
Public Hearing – March 4, 2011  
Testimony on the State Budget for the Department of Social Services**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee and the Human Services Subcommittee,

My name is Susan Raimondo and I am the Senior Director of Advocacy and Programs for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Connecticut Chapter. I am also the family care giver representative to the CT Long Term Care Advisory Council and I serve on the Money Follows the Person Steering Committee. I have been involved in advocacy, providing services and in policy development assisting elders and persons with disabilities for over 25 years in our state.

First, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Connecticut Chapter would like to thank the Legislature, OPM and the Governor's office for funding for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled. We also want to thank the Department of Social Services and their Alternate Care Unit for their outstanding implementation of CHCPD. This program is the only option for younger individuals who are living with degenerative neurological diseases and who are at high risk of institutionalization. We are asking that funding for this essential program be preserved.

The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled (CHCPD) is a pilot program that was developed to provide home-based services to people age 18–64 with degenerative neurological conditions who are at risk of being institutionalized in nursing homes. Currently, the program is serving 41 individuals throughout the state, including those with multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Huntington's. The program has 63 people on the waiting list. These individuals are not eligible for other programs.

The pilot program, administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services' Alternate Care Unit, provides services such as care management, adult day health programs, chore assistance, companions, home health care, home delivered meals, homemaker services, assisted living services and personal care attendants.

Tonight you will hear from individuals living with MS who are enrolled in the program. A

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number of advocates have also submitted written testimony in support of the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled. If CHCPD is eliminated, the 41 individuals currently on the program will lose their home care and have no choice but to be inappropriately institutionalized. In addition to the vital services that this program provides to the individuals enrolled in it, the program is saving the state money.

- The average monthly cost of home care for individuals on the program is \$1,433 compared to a cost of \$5,680 if the individual were to be on Medicaid and living in a nursing home.  
**SAVINGS: \$4,247 per person per month**
- Home care for the 41 people on the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled  
**SAVES: \$2,089,524 each year**

The proposed cuts in health care services to Connecticut's most vulnerable individuals are remarkably distressing. Individuals with multiple sclerosis will be impacted at all levels if these cuts are implemented. We realize the horrific economic crisis that Connecticut is currently facing, but as you contemplate alterations to the budget; please do not forget the faces and stories of those whose lives have been significantly improved by this program.

Please continue to fund the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled.

Thank you for your support.

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