



## State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE  
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE  
INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 1, 2011  
**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**Public Hearing Testimony**

***RE: Proposed H.B. No. 5893 AN ACT CONCERNING HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY.***

Dear Chairman Musto, Chairman Tercyak, Ranking Member Markley, Ranking Member Gibbons and members of the Human Services Committee. I am here today on behalf of several constituents and their families who are currently on the Medicaid ABI Waiver Waitlist.

Currently, there is a waiting list of approximately 55-65 individuals. The 369 slots that are currently provided for brain-injured individuals are filled. The 34 new slots that were added in October 2010 are reserved for people who come into the program by transitioning off the Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration program. I understand that the goal of the federal government is to take people out of nursing homes and that is why they are offering enhanced reimbursement dollars for state's willing to offer waiver slots for MFP clients. My question, however, to this committee is: what do we tell the families who are doing all they can do to keep their loved ones out of nursing homes and institutions, only to find out that this is the faster way to get services?

The two men who I know on the ABI waiting list have been waiting for services since April of 2008 and June 2009 (approximately two and three years, respectively). Over the past few years, the families of these men have been providing full-time care for their brain-injured loved one. In one case, this requires two sisters to take turns and work around the clock to provide care for their brother. They decided to keep their brother in their home because they were told that the wait for ABI services would be approximately two years. Two years has almost come to pass, and the man is still 37<sup>th</sup> on the list. If the list moves at a speed of one or two per month, he is still about two or three years away from getting the services he needs.

The families I know are normal, middle-class families, struggling to pay the bills and keep their families intact. These families made a conscious decision that providing care to their brain-injured family members would be better than putting that person in a nursing home. They were willing to wait the two years that they thought it would take to get a waiver. Now, they see 34 people coming off the MFP program and into the ABI program...while they still wait.

It is hard to explain Medicaid reimbursement rates and transitioning slots to families who are exhausted, frustrated and barely holding on.

I would like to encourage the committee to make recommendations that would either allocate additional funds to reduce the waiting time on the current ABI wait list, or to offer written instructions to the approximately 55 people who are on the wait list and explain to them the process of admitting their loved one to a nursing home, so that the loved one can then be removed from the nursing home to get MFP services and then ABI services. At no time were people on the wait list ever informed of the changes that took place in October 2010.

I know we have a severe budget crisis and we must maximize federal funds, but Governor Malloy has stated that we must protect the social safety net. I agree with him on that point. It seems to me that the 55 brain injured individuals on the waitlist are in great need of a long overdue safety net. Please consider options that would take more people off that list.

Thank you for your consideration of this concept.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Penny Bacchiochi". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Penny Bacchiochi