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TO: Members of the Human Services Committee
FROM: Kevin Brophy, Director of Elder Law for CT Legal Services
DATE: March 8, 2011

RE: **SB 297, AAC an Amendment to the Medicaid State Plan Under Section 1915(i) of the Social Security Act to Provide Home Care Services**

I am the Director of Elder Law for Connecticut Legal Services, a non-profit legal aid agency. My testimony is submitted on behalf of CT's low income elderly and disabled clients.

The State of Connecticut has made strides in supporting the elderly and individuals with disabilities, who would prefer to live in the community and receive home care services, rather than live in an institution. Not only is it good public policy, it is cost effective. For example, the Department of Social Services (DSS) reported a net savings in the Fiscal Year 2008 (the most recent published data) CT Home Care Program for Elders of approximately \$102 million dollars, when compared with the costs that would have been incurred had participants entered nursing homes.

The State of Connecticut currently has several waiver programs that support individuals living in the community. To be eligible individuals must meet the Medicaid financial eligibility criteria, fall within a certain category based on the person's age, diagnosis, condition or disability, and would require nursing home level of care. But, there are weaknesses in our system and gaps in service. Since the waivers are based on the person's age, diagnosis, condition or disability, Connecticut has created "silos" that are confusing to the public and are difficult to access, especially if there is a waitlist for service.

SB 297 would address some of these problems by requiring DSS to amend its Medicaid state plan under Section 1915(i) of the Social Security Act and give DSS the flexibility to focus on the functional limitation of the person rather than the person's age, diagnosis, condition or disability.

I urge you to support SB 297 in an effort to improve access to community-based services.

