

## **canpfa**

The Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers For the Aging

### **Testimony to the Public Health Committee**

#### **In Support of**

### **Senate Bill 1185, An Act Concerning State Payments to Nursing Homes and the Duties of Nursing Home Receivers**

**Presented by Michael Smith, President and CEO of Alzheimer's Resource Center of Connecticut**

**March 23, 2011**

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Michael Smith and I am the President and CEO of the Alzheimer's Resource Center of Connecticut, a non-profit organization located in Plantsville that provides high quality skilled nursing care, assisted living and adult day services. We are also a member of CANPFA. I am here today to a speak in favor of Senate Bill 1185, An Act Concerning State Payments to Nursing Homes and the Duties of Nursing Home Receivers. We view this bill as an opportunity for the state to incentivize change and to transform the landscape of aging services.

I am speaking today as the representative of a 120 bed nursing home that is consistently full and with a lengthy waiting list. I am not here to talk about reducing our beds or changing our model of care. I am here today to talk about how this bill can help us to improve the entire system of long term care, one solution at a time.

That is because this bill is not just about changing a building's floor plan. This bill is also about incentivizing the innovation of services and models of care that will better serve older adults with special needs. Too often innovation is now stymied by outdated regulations and the stagnated ways we allow professionals to provide services. If we are to survive the coming wave of an aging population, our state needs to become agile in their regulatory oversight and encouraging of provider innovation.

The bill before your today would allow a facility to request additional reimbursement or a waiver of regulation to implement a business plan that would enhance services for older adults with special needs. The fiscal impact of that business plan would need to be at least budget neutral by the end of a five-year period, or the plan would need to serve an identified unmet need. For an organization such as mine, this presents an opportunity to elevate the quality of care provided to those suffering from Alzheimer's disease in our state while also possibly reducing the associated costs of that care.

One opportunity might be to share our successful training program designed to reduce the use of psychotropic drugs to treat Alzheimer's patients. Connecticut has been indentified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as having a very high rate of psychotropic drug utilization amongst this patient population. This is not good and has put us in the cross hairs of CMS regulatory oversight. At the Resource Center we rarely have psychotropic drugs prescribed for our residents and we have worked with the Department of Public Health in an effort to share our training module with other providers. We would be happy to conduct the training and modify the prescribing patterns throughout the state, but we need to fund such an initiative. If we were able to present a business plan through the mechanism established in this bill, we might have the opportunity to initiate this project. The result could be a short term initiative that would meet a demonstrated need, improve the quality of care and our statewide quality measures, and reduce overall costs throughout the system.

A second opportunity might be the expansion of our Dementia Care Coaching program which helps family caregivers in the community learn to care for their loved one at home. Right now we offer this program at a private rate and we are able to assist families that can afford the coaching program. If we could receive Medicaid funding for the program, we would be able to reach many more families and save the state thousands of dollars in delayed nursing home admissions.

Theses are just two examples of opportunities to expand the possibilities of aging services through this bill and I encourage you to support its passage.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Smith, President and CEO  
Alzheimer's Resource Center of Connecticut, Inc.  
[msmith@arc-ct.org](mailto:msmith@arc-ct.org), (860) 628-9000