

## **STATEWIDE COALITION OF PRESIDENTS OF RESIDENT COUNCILS**

### **Executive Board Members**

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Hello, my name is Brian Capshaw and I live at Aurora Senior Living Center of East Hartford a nursing home. I'm testifying on behalf of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils representing all 27,000 Connecticut nursing home residents, of which approximately 16,000 receive a personal needs allowance under Medicaid.

Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak and distinguished members of the human services committee. As a nursing home resident I'm pleased to be here today to discuss Senate Bill 395, involving the restoration of our personal needs allowance and HB 5475, requiring DSS to conduct a study of nursing home quality of care.

Imagine your income is cut 13%, what would you do? How would you make ends meet? Or what if everyone in the office received a 3.6% raise and you did not. How would you feel?

That's exactly what happened to the 16,000 Connecticut nursing home residents who receive a personal needs allowance under Medicaid.

In the 2011 budget the 16,000 nursing residents on Medicaid took a 13% or \$9 reduction in their personal needs allowance to save the state 1.7 million dollars, this reduction was listed as temporary in the budget.

Effective January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, all social security recipients received a 3.6% increase in their monthly benefit. As nursing home residents we will turn this increase over to the nursing home as cost of care. This results in the state contributing less Medicaid dollars to nursing homes, saving the state \$4 million in Medicaid spending. The personal needs allowance should be reinstated and a 3.6% cost of living adjustment given at a cost of \$2 million.

We took the time to do a petition in which we gathered over 700 signatures from nursing home residents of more than 40 nursing homes supporting this effort, they were presented to the committee on Aging.

We understand there may be a slight budget surplus or deficit this fiscal year, depending on whom you listen to, Kevin Lembo, Ben Barnes, or whether you use GAAP accounting or modified cash basis accounting, we ask that you consider the fact that our personal needs allowance has not been increased since 2008 and the few products and services we buy have increased in price over the last 3 years. The \$60 we currently receive does not have the ability to meet our needs. By restoring our personal needs allowance to nursing home residents and including a cost of living adjustment, it would greatly impact our quality of lives.

In regards to HB 5475, quality of care is most important to nursing home residents and their family members. We understand running a nursing home is a business, in nursing home owners attempt to turn a profit, quality of care can fall through the cracks, by staffing at levels that do not meet the needs of the residents of nursing homes. A required nursing home quality of care study by DSS could bring many things to light, such as increased bed sore rates due to understaffing.