



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

**Submitted by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut**

**March 7, 2012**

### **Regarding House Bill 5322, An Act Concerning Pressure Redistribution Mattresses and Patient Care in Nursing Home Facilities**

LeadingAge Connecticut, a membership organization representing over 130 mission-driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the continuum of long term care including chronic disease hospitals, nursing homes, and residential care homes. (LeadingAge Connecticut was formerly named the *Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers for the Aging or CANPFA*.)

Our members are sponsored by religious, fraternal, community, and municipal organizations that are committed to providing quality care and services to their residents and clients. Our member organizations, many of which have served their communities for generations, are dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut, I would like to submit the following testimony regarding *House Bill 5322, An Act Concerning Pressure Redistribution Mattresses and Patient Care in Nursing Home Facilities*.

LeadingAge Connecticut is supportive of this proposal to require that when a nursing home or chronic disease hospital associated with a nursing home replaces a mattress, that they replace it with a pressure-redistribution mattress that is designed to help prevent pressure ulcers. However, we do not support the same mandate for residential care homes.

Pressure ulcer prevention is a priority for all LeadingAge Connecticut nursing homes. Our nursing homes report that they have currently replaced or are in the process of replacing their mattresses with pressure-redistribution models. The Committee should know that they are doing so even though the state does not reimburse nursing homes for the purchase of beds or mattresses as they are considered "moveable equipment" and do not currently qualify as part of a fair rent rate calculation for the purpose of reimbursement. Even if moveable equipment was recognized in this rate calculation, nursing home fair rent reimbursement has been frozen by the state for the last three years and will

remain frozen throughout this budget cycle. Nursing homes investing in patient care equipment are doing so without state funding or reimbursement.

Our support of this proposal for the nursing home setting is conditional and is based on the following two assumptions. First, there is a variety of pressure-redistribution mattresses designed to help prevent pressure ulcers. Nursing homes use various vendors and suppliers and we assume that this legislation would not mandate any one particular vendor, model or supplier. Secondly, we do not believe that this legislation would mandate the universal use of alternating pressure air mattresses that are designed for very high risk prevention and pressure ulcer treatment. We would not support an air mattress mandate as we do not believe that it is medically indicated or appropriate.

As stated early, we do not support this mandate for residential care homes. A residential care home is a very different level of care than a skilled nursing home and we do not believe that there is a need for this type of universal mandate at the residential care home level. In fact, some residential care homes allow residents to bring in their own beds and mattresses.

We are more than happy to discuss the issues related to pressure ulcer prevention and treatment with the Committee. LeadingAge Connecticut has worked collaboratively with the Department of Public Health, Qualidigm, Connecticut Hospital Association, Connecticut Association of Home Care and Hospice, and the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities to raise public awareness and enhance caregiver education across the continuum of care. We believe that this information and education is imperative to our state's efforts to ensure the quality of long term care in both community and facility settings.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

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