



Testimony to the Public Health Committee

Presented by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

March 16, 2012

Regarding House Bill 5499, An Act Concerning Regulations Relating to Hospice Care

Good afternoon Representative Ritter, Senator Gerratana, and Members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the President of 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 nursing homes and home health care agencies. (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 in support of *House Bill 5499, An Act Concerning Regulations Relating to Hospice Care*.

LeadingAge Connecticut maintains a vision in which every community offers an integrated and coordinated continuum of high quality and affordable long term health care, housing and community based services. We have therefore supported the Department of Public Health's effort to update the current regulations governing inpatient hospice facilities to reflect both the recently revised Medicare Conditions of Participation and the current standards of quality and patient-centered care. It has been our hope that these revisions would encourage the development of new inpatient hospice facilities, residents or units established through partnerships, integrations or new initiatives so as to provide health care consumers throughout the state with increased access to quality end of life care options. We support the bill before you today that we believe will encourage the passage of these updated regulations.

The state is currently embarking on a right sizing strategic plan for our long term care system. In line with that initiative, LeadingAge Connecticut has been encouraging long term care providers to develop business plans to restructure and/or diversify existing facilities and services to strengthen the full continuum through the development of enhanced models of care. The common goal is to reshape the long term care system to meet current consumer demands, market needs and the goals of the state's long term care plan. The opportunity to provide high quality, facility-based end of life care to meet the needs of the community should be available as an option for existing long term care providers to consider in such planning. That is why it is imperative that the state move now to adopt new hospice facility regulations while the state is investing in a long term care right sizing initiative and quality long term care providers are strategically planning for the future of aging services.

Thank you for this opportunity to present this testimony.

Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

1340 Worthington Ridge, Berlin, CT 06037 (860)828-2903 mmorelli@leadingagect.org