

Greenwich Nursing & Healthcare Registry, Inc. # 40

Est. 1930

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
REGARDING RAISED BILL NO. 6432
AN ACT CONCERNING HOMEMAKER SERVICES AND HOMEMAKER
COMPANION AGENCIES.

February 26, 2013

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak and other Committee members. Our names are Crystal Ramsey and Kathleen Schluensen we are co-owners of the Greenwich Nursing and Health Care Registry. The Nurses Registry has been serving Greenwich and the surrounding communities for more than 80 years. We are members of the CT Association of Home Care Registries as well as members of the Private Care Association, a national association of home care registries. Both organizations are dedicated to promoting best practices within the homecare industry. The Registry serves a range of patients from pediatrics through geriatrics and the terminally ill. We are Registered Nurses with 60 years of combined nursing experience.

We are here to testify in opposition of Raised Bill No. 6432 and in favor of the Registry Business Model. Many of our caregiver registry members have an excess of 20 years experience and service to the community. The caregivers remain long standing members because of job autonomy. The Registry offers our members:

- Flexibility - the caregiver can structure their work schedule
- The right to accept or decline assignments
- The ability to schedule time off at their discretion
- Average compensation rate \$20/per hour in the lower Fairfield County area (most of our nurse aides earned more than 50K in 2012 depending on availability)

Having choices and options are beneficial to both clients and caregivers. This business model does not work for every caregiver or client however; it works extremely well for many.

The Greenwich Nursing and Healthcare Registry is an integral part of our community referring quality caregivers. Our clients have come to trust and depend on our referral service because we offer our clients

- The ability to choose their caregiver(s)
- Continuity of care eliminating multiple caregivers
- Knowledge that all caregivers referred have been thoroughly screened: complete criminal background checks, credential verifications, personal and professional references, motor vehicle checks, social security verifications
- Cost effectiveness
- Schedule management
- Registered Nurse on-call 24 hours, 7 days per week for initiation of new services, schedule changes, and handle cancellations and concerns
- Assistance with filing Long Term Care insurance claims
- Ability to cancel/change at any time without penalty
- Direct pay to caregiver; no fee to the Registry from the Client

In addition, the Greenwich Registry also provides referrals

- to local schools
- to local physician offices
- to the local diabetic children's camp as needed
- to the local hospital for one-on-one coverage for clients deemed "at risk"
- to hospice clients for supplemental and/or end-of-life care
- to clients who need to travel
- to clients needing Skilled Nursing Visits

The passage of Raised Bill No. 6432 will result in

- Elimination of Nursing Registries in the State of CT
- Loss of jobs for our caregivers
- Increased risk to the caregivers
- Significant increase in the underground workers resulting in loss of tax revenue
- Increased risk to the frail elderly and vulnerable patients
- Disruption of patient services
- Increased cost to clients and other funding sources

We support common sense regulations to improve our industry, better protect consumers, and provide a quality work experience for our registrants. We encourage you to approve SB-518 instead of moving forward with RB-6432. We need to preserve and enhance the registry model as other states have. Legislators should work together with those in the field to maintain consumer self-direction and choice. Enabling consumers with real choices, continuity of care, and cost effective solutions to the complex problems of aging in place.

We are willing to work with legislators to address issues but if we are forced to close, the residents of Connecticut lose a valuable service and caregivers lose their career options. We ask that the committee set aside RB 6342 in favor of **SB-518 "AN ACT CREATING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY EMPLOYMENT ISSUES CONCERNING REGISTRIES IN THE HOMEMAKER AND COMPANION SERVICES INDUSTRY."**

Our community has lost the Greenwich Hospital Home Care Service and most recently, the Visiting Nurse and Hospice of Stamford and the Hospice residence. Now we are threatened with the loss of the Registry, this will severely limit patient choices and services in our area.

In this economic climate we must protect the caregiver's jobs and affordable patient options. Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be pleased to answer any questions.