

Public Health Committee
March 20, 2013

Jennifer Smith, District 1199/SEIU HealthCare

Testimony in OPPOSITION to SB 1064 – An Act Concerning the Administration of Medication in Nursing Homes by Certain Nurse’s Aides

As a union of over 6,000 nurses and certified nursing assistants (CNAs, aka nurse’s aides) working in Connecticut nursing homes, we oppose Senate Bill #1064 – *An Act Concerning the Administration of Medication in Nursing Homes by Certain Nurse’s Aides*:

1. Nursing home residents are older, sicker, and more frail than 20 years ago. As Connecticut’s population ages and healthier residents move into home care options, this trend will continue – meaning future nursing home residents will need more medical attention and care than those today, not less.
2. Geriatric nurses working in skilled long-term care facilities these days spend most of their time fulfilling the many paperwork and charting demands, not in hands-on care. Administering medications to residents is one of the few scheduled times nurses have to do a visual and verbal assessment of each resident in person to supplement and complement the reports they receive from CNAs.
3. Under current state regulations, CNAs can be responsible for more than a dozen residents during day shift and even more on evenings and nights. They have a difficult time keeping up with all of the responsibilities they have now – adding another hands-on task that demands concentration in a distracting environment is not a good care decision.
4. Rather than have decisions about care practice made by people who don’t do the work on the ground and in the trenches, why not ask the caregivers themselves? If you do, you will find that geriatric nurses who work in nursing homes almost universally oppose this proposal. Their first concern is for the health, safety and comfort of the people they care for.

5. This is simply a way to cut corners - at the expense of residents and caregivers.

###