



**Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)  
Testimony to the Aging Committee  
Regarding HB5233- funding for Elderly Nutrition under the CT Home  
Care Program for the Elders  
February 25th, 2014**

Good morning Senator Ayala, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee, my name is Timothy Grills and I am the Director of Nutrition Services for Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) and part of the statewide Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Providers (CANSAP) of Elderly Nutrition Programs (ENPs). I am here today to offer testimony **in favor of HB5223- AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR ELDERLY NUTRITION.**

As individuals age, many people prefer to live at home. While the state has invested some financial resources towards this effort, there has not been a continued effort to provide increased funding for elderly nutrition. The Connecticut Home Care program rate is \$4.79 and the average rate in the federal program is \$8.13. For TVCCA, this is a dramatic \$3.34 difference.

There are two Meals on Wheels programs: the Connecticut Home Care Program and the federal Title III-C program for Elderly Nutrition. The reimbursement rates are vastly different in each program. We often deliver the same meal, from the same vehicle to a similar person and be reimburse at about half the price! Despite the costs being the same, the only difference is the program that is providing the reimbursement.

Our program loses money on every meal it serves in the Connecticut Home Care Program and we are not alone as all of CANSAP members also lose money on single meals by an average of \$1.95 per meal.

Reimbursement rates for services offered under the CT Home Care Program have not been increased since 2007. While we recognize that flat funding is better than a cut, our costs to administer the program have gone up dramatically. The price of gas and food continues to rise, and providers are losing money each day with each meal served to a Connecticut Home Care Program participant.

While we continuously work to find creative ways of bringing in money, such as working with our community partners for grant opportunities, none of these potential solutions are enough to offset our costs in the Home Care Program.

The home care providers who are essential to providing the care that will allow an individual to remain at home have not seen reimbursement levels from the Connecticut Home Care Program increased to accompany the increasing costs in the program.

Elderly nutrition, often known as the Meals on Wheels program, is a key to home care. Providing just one or two meals a day to an elderly person in their home helps ensure that individuals are meeting nutritional standards necessary to keep them healthy and active. The Meals on Wheels program is more than a meal. This simple and very inexpensive service can prevent or delay more costly services such as hospitalizations and nursing home care.

Elderly nutrition programs provide peripheral benefits such as having a person stop by the house each day who is able to recognize the signs of an elderly person whose health might be deteriorating, as well as something as simple as providing daily social contact. This daily "check-up" is a life line for many.

Without a rate increase, home care providers such as TVCCA may not be able to continue to provide this vital service and in the end, it will be our seniors who will suffer.

**We urge you to increase reimbursement rates under the CT Home Care Program for Elders and pass House Bill HB5223- AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR ELDERLY NUTRITION**

Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter.