

My name is Lisa Farren and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of the CT Home Care Program for Elders and how the program currently works.

My Mother, Assunta DiTommaso, (client ID#003790617) is currently enrolled in this program.

My parents came to the United States from Italy in the 1950's in hopes of building a better life for their growing new family. They came not speaking any English and with little more than the clothes on their backs. Despite the many obstacles and challenges they managed to build a solid life here in Connecticut. Earning a modest income as factory workers at Ensign Bickford they purchased a small home, raised a family and were contributing members of society. Money was always tight yet by living frugally and saving they lived a happy life.

When my Father fell ill in his late 80's their modest savings quickly dwindled as they private paid for his medical and homecare expenses. It was always my parents' desire to remain at home during their golden years. My Father passed in 2011 and shortly thereafter my Mother's health also began to decline. Over the past few years her need for homecare has increased and the assistance we have received from the CT Home Care Program has proved a lifeline.

My Mother's income from her pension as a factory worker is modest at best and all money saved over the years has quickly diminished as we paid for my Father's and now my Mother's health and homecare expenses.

My Mother fell in September 2014 which resulted in 2½ months away from home, first in a hospital then in a rehabilitation facility. My Mother was miserable in rehab asking multiple times a day when she could return home again. She was no longer able to be alone so the only options were to place her in a skilled nursing facility or find a 24/7 live-in caregiver which was the option we chose. The cost of the live-in caregiver is much less than the cost would be for skilled nursing and she is much happier. I do not know what my sisters and I would do without the CT Home Care Program. It has allowed us to keep my Mother at home with the care she needs to be comfortable, happy and above all safe in her own home. Living in her own home has had the added benefit of helping her live more effectively with her dementia – her surroundings are familiar which helps keep her mind more focused and clear than it was when she was in the rehab facility.

My Mother has very little savings left and we are always cognizant of how we spend her money to make her savings last as long as possible. Having her copay increase from 7% to 15% would only prove to further her financial burden.

I feel strongly that is the responsibility of the State of Connecticut to assist its aging residents – those who have worked hard, have proved themselves to be contributing members of society for so many years and who often times do not have the ability or capacity to advocate for their needs. We need to support our aging community by providing them the assistance they need and deserve. I believe aging comfortably at home should be a basic right for the residents of Connecticut and therefore ask you to maintain the current CT Home Care Program copay at 7%.

Respectfully submitted,

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