

STATEWIDE COALITION OF PRESIDENTS OF RESIDENT COUNCILS

Hello my name is Brian Capshaw and I live at the nursing home Greensprings Healthcare and Rehab in East Hartford. I'm submitting/testifying on behalf of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils representing all 26,000 Connecticut nursing home residents, of which approximately 17,000 receive a personal needs allowance (PNA) under Medicaid.

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the appropriations committee. As a nursing home resident I'm pleased to be here to discuss H.B. 6846, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services. I expected to be here asking to restore the budget cut from 2011 but instead I'm asking you not to cut our PNA again. In the 2011 budget nursing home residents shared in the state budget cuts and took what was listed as temporary, a \$9 or 13% reduction in our PNA down to \$60 a month. We are again being asked to share in the state budget reductions with a \$10 or 17% reduction down to \$50 a month. That is a total of \$19 or 30% reduction. This latest reduction would take us back to 1998 levels of the PNA. With an average inflation rate of 2.23% over the last 17 years that dollar in 1998 would need to be \$1.46 today to have the same purchasing power. Adjusted for inflation that \$50 PNA in 1998 would need to be \$73 today to have the same purchasing power. Keep in mind Connecticut is the 49th most expensive state behind Hawaii and has a 20% higher average cost index than the typical state on items residents purchase with their PNA.

What does the PNA mean to a nursing home resident? Something's you may take for granted, a meal ordered out, a cold soda in the afternoon, a new shirt/blouse, haircut or maybe just a bag of bird seed so a resident can watch the birds out of his/her window. Many residents already rely on family members to help meet their needs. But more important what does it mean to me? I would have to put off my \$10 monthly haircut to every other month. I would have to take a look the \$7 or 8 a week spent on a group ordering out night. Will I have to ask my family members for assistance every month? I don't know?

We understand the state is looking to balance the budget, but we have been helping every year, DSS has been sending less Medicaid dollars, \$19.3 million over the last five years, to nursing home operators as we have turned over our social security increases as cost of care. We are the only group of residents in the state that have to turn over the social security increases as cost of care, any resident group in the community gets to keep their social security increases. I know the Governor's budget proposal this year is asking the ABD population to turn over their social security increases as of care for the first time this year. Nursing home residents are an isolated population.

Other states have increased not reduced their PNA, in the last two years Colorado increased their PNA by \$25 to \$75 Maryland by \$7 to \$75, Minnesota by \$6 to \$95, New Hampshire by \$9 to \$65 and Ohio has given their residents a \$5 increase each of the last two years. Currently Illinois, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York and New Mexico all have pending legislation to raise their states PNA. OPM states the national average is \$50, at that level Connecticut would rank 16th among all 50 states. Again we are the 2nd most expensive state to live in behind Hawaii. In this legislative session, democratic representatives Claire Janowski and Jeffery Berger put forth HB 5128 to raise the PNA, republican Senator Kevin Kelly put forth SB 712 to raise the PNA, democrat representative Joe Serra put forth HB 5646 to raise the PNA, The Committee on Aging has put forth HB 6893 to raise the PNA, we have gotten co-sponsors republican Senator Joe Markley, republican representative Pam Staneski, democrat representative Henry Genga, this is a bipartisan issue. I urge you to reject the governor's proposal and join these other states from across the country and look at increasing our PNA.

I'd like to thank the committee for your time and consideration. I hope you will come together and reject the Governor's proposal and support the Aging committee bill HB 6893 which raises the PNA to \$65 and supports Connecticut's nursing home residents who rely on Medicaid and the PNA for the little extras most people take for granted.