



Testimony to the Aging Committee

Presented by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

February 25, 2016

Regarding

- [S.B. No. 161](#), AN ACT CONCERNING NOTIFICATION OF PENALTIES FOR ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF NURSING HOME RESIDENT
- [S.B. No. 164](#), AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID COVERAGE OF TELEMONITORING SERVICES
- [S.B. No. 165](#), AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM
- [S.B. No. 166](#), AN ACT EXPANDING UTILIZATION OF PATIENT-DESIGNATED CAREGIVERS
- [S.B. No. 167](#), AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF EMERGENCY POWER NEEDS IN PUBLIC HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY
- [H.B. No. 5284](#), AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR ELDERLY NUTRITION)
- [H.B. No. 5285](#), AN ACT REQUIRING THE STATE OMBUDSMAN TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RECIPIENTS OF HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED CARE
- [H.B. No. 5286](#), AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE
- [H.B. No. 5287](#), AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME-CARE SERVICES
- [H.B. No. 5289](#), AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS

Good morning Senator Flexer, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee. On behalf of [LeadingAge Connecticut](#), a membership association representing not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the entire field of aging services and senior housing, I would like to submit the following testimony on several of the bills that are before you today and offer the Committee our assistance as you consider these various issues.

S.B. No. 161, AN ACT CONCERNING NOTIFICATION OF PENALTIES FOR ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF NURSING HOME RESIDENT

LeadingAge Connecticut has no objection to this proposed bill as it is written. The proposed bill reflects the language that was agreed upon between LeadingAge Connecticut and other interested parties in previous legislative sessions and we appreciate the Committee's recognition of that agreement.

S.B. No. 164, AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID COVERAGE OF TELEMONITORING SERVICES

LeadingAge Connecticut continues to support extending Medicaid coverage to a broad menu of home telemonitoring services. The development of policy at the state level to advance the use of appropriate aging-services technologies can transform the aging experience and enhance care and services for older adults. Telemonitoring is one aspect of technology that can play a crucial role in the provision of home and community based aging services and realize savings for the Medicaid program. Safety technologies, health and wellness technologies, social connectedness technologies and electronic documentation technologies are other important aspects of aging services technologies. For the Committee's information, the following is a link to the *LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST)* website which includes information and resources regarding the development, evaluation and adoption of emerging technologies that can improve the aging experience: <http://www.leadingage.org/CAST.aspx>

S.B. No. 165, AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM

LeadingAge Connecticut strongly supports our state's respite care program and would support any effort to increase funding so as to ensure that those currently enrolled in the program can continue to receive an adequate level of respite care as well as to expand enrollment to increase the number of individuals and their deserving caregivers who would be able to receive respite services. Many elders with dementia live within their own homes for many years with the majority of the caregiving being provided by a spouse, relative, or close friend. These unpaid caregivers provide countless hours of unpaid long term care, services and supports. They are the true heroes of our long term services and supports system and providing them with needed respite is not only the right thing to do, but it is the prudent thing to do as they save our Medicaid program millions of dollars every year.

S.B. No. 166, AN ACT EXPANDING UTILIZATION OF PATIENT-DESIGNATED CAREGIVERS

This bill would extend the Care Act provisions previously implemented for hospital discharges to also apply to nursing home discharges. The spirit and intent of the Care Act is something that LeadingAge Connecticut nursing home members understand well as nursing homes are already required to develop safe discharge plans and routinely involve family members or substitute decision-makers in the care planning process. In fact some of the requirements contained in the Care Act are already required of nursing homes, but the Act does go somewhat further to the extent that it requires training for informal caregivers at the time of discharge and allows the patient to designate that caregiver. While these are certainly current best practices in nursing home discharges, they are not required by statute and are examples of Care Act requirements that the Committee may want to extend to nursing homes. There are also some helpful provisions regarding nursing home facility liability connected with post-discharge care that we would ask be included.

If it is determined that provisions of the Care Act should be extended to nursing homes, it would be misguided to do so by amending the hospital statute. Rather, because nursing homes already have a state statute (CGS 19a-535) and regulation (Public Health Code – 19-13-D8t(p)) that govern discharge, it would make sense to place the relevant aspects of the Care Act that the Committee wishes to extend to nursing homes into that statute. This would ensure that any new provisions are properly integrated with the current nursing home requirements and that all nursing home discharge requirements are located in one statute. We urge the Committee to consider this request.

Successful care transitions are critical to better outcomes and health care providers are working to improve upon them every day. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the hospitals' experience with the Care Act and to work with the Committee on the bill before you today.

S.B. No. 167, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF EMERGENCY POWER NEEDS IN PUBLIC HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

LeadingAge Connecticut represents many affordable senior housing organizations throughout the state including several state-assisted housing developments. We recognize and appreciate the fact that the issue of emergency power needs for such housing sites has been an ongoing concern for this Committee. We support the proposed study of emergency power needs in senior housing as outlined in this bill and offer our support and assistance.

H.B. No. 5284, AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR ELDERLY NUTRITION

LeadingAge Connecticut supports this bill which acknowledges the need to increase the fee schedule rates for meals on wheels deliveries provided through the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE). A high value should be placed on this program which not only provides crucial daily nutritional meals, but also ensures a daily visit and eyes on contact with the elderly recipients receiving those meals in their homes.

H.B. No. 5285, AN ACT REQUIRING THE STATE OMBUDSMAN TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RECIPIENTS OF HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

The work of the independent Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is extremely valuable to nursing home residents and we support the concept of expanding the role of the Office to reflect the rebalancing of the long-term care field. We are concerned however that the definition of “home and community-based services” contained in this bill is extremely broad and potentially overwhelming. The Committee might consider a phased in expansion of duties for the Ombudsman such as for example, starting with home and community based services provided by licensed and certified providers, or home and community based services funded through state and federal programs. Refining the definition of home and community based services, at least initially, would serve to clarify the expectation and responsibility of the Office. The statute might also want to reference some distinction between the duties of the Ombudsman and the Office of Elderly Protective Services with regard to the investigations.

H.B. No. 5286, AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE

LeadingAge Connecticut has no objection to this proposed bill and would be happy to assist the Committee with such a study.

H.B. No. 5287, AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME-CARE SERVICES

LeadingAge Connecticut supports providing Medicaid coverage retroactively for eligible home-care clients in accordance with federal law.

H.B. No. 5289, AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS

Prevention of elder abuse is a priority for LeadingAge Connecticut members and we support this legislation which is drawn from the excellent [report on elder abuse](#) produced by the Commission on Aging in accordance with Public Act [15-236](#).

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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