Connecticut Department of Social Services

Making a Difference

Written Testimony before the Aging Committee
Submitted by the Department of Social Services
March 3, 2016

S.B. No. 242 (RAISED) - AN ACT CONCERNING NURSING HOMES

The Department of Social Services commends the Aging Committee for its attention to the need for strategic planning for Medicaid long-term care services. This is a critical need given the strong preferences of older adults and individuals with disabilities to live in home and community-based settings, the state's interest in controlling escalating costs, and support for town-level tailoring of strategies to meet local needs. However, DSS respectfully states that this legislation is not needed.

In keeping with the legislation enacted by the General Assembly, Governor Malloy, the Office of Policy and Management, and DSS released the Strategic Plan to Rebalance Long-Term Services and Supports. The strategic plan captures the data and planning strategies that are contemplated by this bill. Also, Connecticut General Statutes section 17b-337 requires the Connecticut Long-Term Care Planning Committee to prepare a long-term care plan every three years based on the fundamental principle that individuals with long-term care needs have the option to choose and receive long-term care and support in the least restrictive, appropriate setting. The most recent plan, entitled Balancing the System: Working Toward Real Choice for Long-Term Services and Supports in Connecticut, was recently released in January of 2016.

H.B. No. 5380 (RAISED) - AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF COST SAVINGS FROM THE UTILIZATION OF MOBILITY SYSTEMS

This bill requires the Department, in consultation with the State Department on Aging, to conduct a study and report on the potential costs savings to the state from the use of technology, including mobility systems that assist transferring immobile or semi-ambulatory individuals. The report on cost savings associated with reducing injuries to recipients of state-funded assistance and the staff that assist those individuals. The report would also identify savings related to the reduction in the need for hospital and nursing home admissions due to the use of mobility technology.

The Department is required to cover this type of technology whenever it is deemed medically necessary after an assessment of an individual's specific needs. Since the Department already provides this technology when needed, there is no control group that the Department can use to

conduct this study. Furthermore, the Department does not have the resources or ability to create one.

In addition, the Department could not obtain the information necessary to conduct such a study without obtaining a written authorization for the disclosure of medical records from the individuals in the target population, as required by federal and state law.

Lastly, this study would have no impact on Medicaid recipients or costs and would be unnecessary since the services are already provided and any such cost savings attributed to this are already occurring. Therefore, the Department must oppose this legislation.