

TESTIMONY OF NEXT HEALTH, LLC, IN SUPPORT OF  
SB 38 AA REQUIRING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR PATIENT LIFTS  
INSURANCE COMMITTEE  
FEB 18, 2016

My name is Raymond Curatolo, and I am the President of Next Health, LLC located in Norwalk, CT. I am here testifying on behalf of Next Health in support of Senate Bill 38; an act requiring health insurance coverage for the purchase or rental of a patient transfer and mobility system that enables an individual to transfer from a traditional hospital bed to a wheelchair with an integrated commode and back without lifting them, provided such individual's treating physician has certified, in writing, that the patient transfer and mobility system is medically necessary. We believe that this bill will be financially beneficial for insurance providers because it enhances a patient's mobility, reduces risk of injury to them and their caregivers and can be instrumental in preventing inpatient admissions and allow an individual to remain in their home. This solution will have a positive impact to all across the healthcare continuum- patient, caregiver, payor, and family.

By way of background, Next Health is the manufacturer and marketer of a patient transfer solution, known as the AgileLife. Our company, which is privately owned, was organized in January 2009 to develop and market the solution which is patented, FDA registered, and has been successfully used in private homes, community group homes, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and hospitals. Our clients' conditions include traumatic brain injuries, stroke, multiple sclerosis, Guillain Barre Syndrome and more; all of which have led to their immobility and need for this product. Within CT we are working with the Department of Social Services

and the Money Follows the Person program as well as having discussions with Elizabeth Ritter, Commissioner of Connecticut Department on Aging.

With the use of AgileLife patients have:

- Improved their quality of life
- Restored independence and dignity
- Reduced risk of them developing a pressure ulcer
- Reduced the risk of them falling
- Reduced hospital re-admissions

Caregivers are able to give their patients a higher quality of care with a reduced risk of injury or disability, along with a reduction of worker's compensation claims. Families can keep their loved ones at home, often without the need of an additional caregiver. Over a 12 month period we have recorded:

- ✓ Over 10,000 client transfers
- ✓ Over 20,000 in-bed client repositions
- ✓ Over 5,000 client days in the device
- ✓ **Zero injuries** to clients and caregivers recorded

From an innovation prospective, Next Health was recently a recipient of a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), as well as the Connecticut Quality Improvement Award for the innovation of AgileLife and our company's growing presence in Connecticut.

There is a significant market need for this type of patient transfer and mobility system, as there are currently 8.4 million individuals requiring assistance with activities of daily living including transfer assistance, and 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 every day. Throughout our experience in both the home and institutional settings, we have seen the toll of patient immobilization and the strain it places on families and caregivers, leading to long-term effects that evolve into insurance claims, and at a rapid rate. The unfortunate reality is that we receive a large number of inquiries from individuals that would significantly benefit from the use an AgileLife type-system, however; without insurance coverage they are faced to revert back to sling lifts and/or mechanical lifting, hence; higher risk of injury and additional claims.

In closing, Senate Bill 38 would:

- Enable individuals to use an AgileLife-type system that will enhance mobility and reduce the risk of developing medical conditions causing additional medical costs
- Enable individuals to remain in their home
- Enable an individual to return to their home from an inpatient facility in a safe manner

All these factors ultimately prevent inpatient admissions and more costly insurance claims. To clarify the cost savings nature of this bill, we have attached proposed substitute language for your consideration. That language is intended to make clear that in order to qualify for this coverage, the physician must certify that the patient would otherwise require an inpatient admission.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and your support.

**Proposed Substitute language for  
SB 38 AA REQUIRING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR PATIENT LIFTS**

**Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2017*)** Each individual health insurance policy providing coverage of the type specified in subdivisions (1), (2), (4), (11) and (12) of section 38a-469 of the general statutes delivered, issued for delivery, renewed, amended or continued in this state, shall provide coverage for the purchase or rental of a patient transfer system, provided such individual's treating physician has certified, in writing, that the patient transfer and mobility system is medically necessary to prevent an inpatient admission or to allow an individual to be released from an inpatient facility to home. For purposes of this section, "Patient transfer system" is a system using innovative technology to enable an individual to transfer from a traditional hospital bed to a wheelchair with an integrated commode and back.

**Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2017*)** Each group health insurance policy providing coverage of the type specified in subdivisions (1), (2), (4), (11) and (12) of section 38a-469 of the general statutes delivered, issued for delivery, renewed, amended or continued in this state, shall provide coverage for the purchase or rental of a patient transfer system, provided such individual's treating physician has certified, in writing, that the patient transfer and mobility system is medically necessary to prevent an inpatient admission or to allow an individual to be released from an inpatient facility to home. For purposes of this section, "Patient transfer system" is a system using innovative technology to enable an individual to transfer from a traditional hospital bed to a wheelchair with an integrated commode and back.