



Connecticut

Public Health Committee

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Testimony in Support of Raised Senate Bill #298

AN ACT CONCERNING TELEHEALTH SERVICES FOR MEDICAID RECIPIENTS

Submitted by Nora Duncan, State Director

nduncan@aarp.org

On behalf of AARP Connecticut and approximately 600,000 members in the state, AARP is pleased to testify in support of Raised Senate Bill 298. If passed, this bill will provide coverage for telehealth services for individuals enrolled in Medicaid.

The broad scope of tele-medicine presents a vehicle to help achieve the triple aim of better health care, improved health outcomes and lower costs. It is widely acknowledged for its potential to ameliorate health care workforce issues by creating efficiencies and extending the reach of existing providers. With the potential to overcome access and other barriers, tele-medicine is also viewed as a means to reduce health disparities for aging and underserved populations, as well as reduce costs and burdens for patients.

AARP believes that tele-medicine services hold the promise of helping not only patients but also their family caregivers access health care and long term services and supports in new ways. We support the kinds of initiatives, as Raised Senate Bill 298 presents, that will help keep individuals living independently in their homes and communities and to make it easier for working family caregivers to care for their loved ones.

In Connecticut there are approximately 459,000 family caregivers providing \$5.9 billion annually in unpaid care for their loved ones. Family caregiving is an issue that affects just about every one of us. Raised Senate Bill 298 could help family caregivers by improving access to needed health services, help monitor a loved one's health, and provide health services for the caregiver.

Raised Senate Bill 298 is an important step for Connecticut's consumers. Furthering the use of tele-medicine could also help make it easier for patients and family caregivers to access the information and instruction they need to perform medical and nursing tasks they are being called upon to provide-- especially when their loved ones are discharged from the hospital.

We appreciate the opportunity speak on behalf of AARP today, and we encourage the Committee on Public Health to support Raised Senate Bill 298.