
Testimony Regarding provision of Public Act 22-12 section 1, Task Force to Study Issues Concerning Homemaker-Companion Agencies:

Dear Task Force:

November 03, 2022

This testimony is to share my own positive experience with non-medical Homemaker-Companion Agencies and my belief that a robust Homemaker-Companion Agency industry is of great value and an important part of a healthy aging process.

I am a retired RN with many years of experience in the medical field, including positions both Clinical and HHA Supervisory positions with Medicare Homecare Agencies, and most recently at local senior living communities as an RN Designee, SALSA and Director of Assisted Living. During my nursing career, I have often witnessed the benefits of non-medical companion and homemaker services for our elderly and my colleagues and I have frequently referred seniors to hire these agencies. In fact, I currently work on a very part-time basis in an administrative, non-medical capacity for a Homemaker-Companion Agency - in large part because I know firsthand how much value these agencies offer to seniors and their families.

The current Task Force study delineates six topics to review. I applaud the concept of review because in doing so one may often find problems to resolve as well as ways to make a good thing better. I am here to testify that the current structure for non-medical Homemaker and Companion Agencies in CT is actually very good, in my experience. While every industry will have some degree of consumer complaints and non-compliant entities, I am aware of relatively few of them among non-medical HCAs. In my experience, HCAs recruit and hire competent, qualified staff and they are well prepared for companion and homemaker tasks including making meals and tidying up, washing and folding laundry, transportation, companionship and engagement, medical reminders and assisting with personal hygiene. Companions clean out old/expired food from the fridge, sanitize counters, do the grocery shopping, make meals, and plate it up for the week, help with washing up and dressing appropriately, and communicate with the family as well as the agency office. Companions also engage with our seniors, reducing isolation and creating positive experiences, and often their presence offers respite for a family member who can leave for a few hours without worrying that an impaired senior will hurt himself if left alone.

Seniors who need medical services get those services from medical providers, such as Visiting Nurse Agencies, Primary Care or Concierge Doctors and specialists, or Hospice providers; Companion-Homemaker agencies are a *supplement* to those services. I have not experienced HCAs that mislead consumers to believe they are offering medical services and would agree that any Agencies who do so are unethical and must be stopped.

Considering the workforce shortage of medical providers today, and the importance of non-medical services to maintain quality of life for our aging population, it is in our community's best interests to maintain a healthy and robust Homemaker-Companion industry in CT to support our aging seniors and supplement other care.

Signed,

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