

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION  
for *Home Care, Inc*

**Testimony by the Connecticut Association for Home Care  
To the  
Human Services Committee  
In Support of HB 5462 – An Act Concerning Long Term Care  
March 4, 2004**

My name is Brian Ellsworth and I am President of the Connecticut Association for Home Care (CAHC), which represents home care agencies serving over 50,000 elderly and disabled Connecticut residents. I am here today to speak in support of HB 5462, An Act Concerning Long Term Care.<sup>1</sup>

The Connecticut Association for Home Care, through our participation on the Long Term Care Advisory Council, has been integrally involved in the development of the state's Long Term Care Plan issued on January 1, 2004. This bill begins the first step of implementing the Long Term Care Plan's vision of "re-balancing" the long term care system away from institutional to community-based care and assistance.

Home and community based long term care is not only the preferred alternative for the elderly and disabled, it saves the state precious resources. According to the most recent report by the state, the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elders **saved the taxpayers \$63.5 million** in 2002 by keeping people out of more expensive institutional settings.

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<sup>1</sup> HB 5462 seeks to improve long-term care for residents of the state by: (1) Providing that the state long-term care plan shall be guided by the principle that individuals with long-term care needs shall have the option to choose and receive long-term care and support in the least restrictive, appropriate setting; (2) providing funds needed to implement the comprehensive needs assessment previously authorized by the legislature; and (3) expanding the state-funded personal care assistance program from fifty to one hundred persons.

In order to maintain this level of success, however, we need to address adequacy of payments and workforce shortages. As the state looks to expand the Personal Care Assistant Program from 50 to 100 persons, we also need to preserve and protect our existing programs, such as home health aides. Due to federal and state requirements designed to ensure quality care, Medicare-certified home health agencies must comply with a host of costly mandates in the provision of home health aide services. These include: training, bi-weekly supervisory visits by registered nurses and voluminous paperwork.

These well-intentioned mandates drive our costs increasingly higher and can create an un-level playing field as other less regulated options are put forward. This can be a deadly combination as home care agencies compete for scarce workers to perform demanding jobs.

We support HB 5462 and we ask the state's assistance through a mix of rate increases and regulatory relief designed to ensure that existing home care providers can continue their mission of high quality, cost effective care in the least restrictive setting.

Thank you.