

April 8, 2009

# Legislative Update

## The Connecticut Association for Home Care & Hospice

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Dear Jennifer,

Over the past two weeks, the [Connecticut Association for Home Care & Hospice](#) (CAHCH) and its members have been advocating for important home care and hospice issues. Below is a snapshot of bills relevant to CAHCH as well as highlights of [S.B. 1122](#) and the Appropriations Committee Budget. For a full list of bills that CAHCH is tracking from the previous two weeks, [click here](#).

Please let us know if you have any suggestions regarding the update. Suggestion or questions can be emailed to Jennifer Bernheim at [bernheim@cahch.org](mailto:bernheim@cahch.org).

### Feature Issue - SB 1122 Fiscal Note Released

[S.B. 1122](#), An Act Concerning Changes to the Human Services Statutes, has received a [Fiscal Note](#) and [Bill Analysis](#). It is on the Senate calendar and is expected to be sent to the Appropriations Committee at some point. CAHCH is speaking with Senator Doyle, co-chair of the Human Services Committee, in an effort to urge that this bill continue to move forward.

We are concerned that the Office of Fiscal Analysis has not identified what we believe to be significant savings that will offset the costs of the Medicaid rate increases. By contrast, the Fiscal Note does mention the potential for significant savings from implementing flu shots and telemonitoring.

CAHCH has also identified a drafting error in [S.B. 1122](#) regarding the definition of nurse as Advance Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). We will communicate this error and seek a revision to this language as well.

Members are encouraged to contact their Senator and urge them to become a co-signer of the bill and advocate for swift enactment of this important legislation. Please contact CAHCH immediately if you need assistance or have feedback to share.

### Select Bills

Following are some important bills of interest that are still live:

[S.B. No. 1122](#) AN ACT CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE HUMAN SERVICES STATUTES

[S.B. No. 843](#) AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING SOCIAL SERVICES

[S.B. No. 814](#) AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANCE SERVICES UNDER THE CONNECTICUT HOME CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY

[H.B. No. 5312](#) AN ACT CONCERNING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR EMPLOYEES OF HOMEMAKER-COMPANION AGENCIES AND HOME HEALTH AGENCIES

[H.B. No. 6678](#) AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH LICENSING STATUTES

[H.B. No. 6443](#) AN ACT CONCERNING DIRECT BILLING FOR HOME CARE NURSING SERVICES PROVIDED TO MEDICAID RECIPIENTS

## Appropriations Committee Budget

The Appropriations Committee budget represents the second of a three-step process to complete the State budget, with the final step being negotiations between legislative leaders and the Governor --expected to transpire over in the next few weeks. Please refer to Bulletin #2009-08 for more details.

Following are some items of specific interest to CAHCH members:

- **Medicaid Rates:** Unlike other providers, such as nursing homes, there are no significant Medicaid rate cuts for home care. Unfortunately, there are no rate increases either. This is not surprising given the stage of the process and the overall budget environment. See discussion above about [S.B. 1122](#).
- **Telemonitors:** CAHCH is pleased that the Committee adopted the Governor's recommendation regarding Medicaid coverage of telemonitors. We will work to ensure that there is language in the budget implementer bills that reflects our telemonitoring proposal as contained in sections 3 & 4 of [S.B. 1122](#). In contrast to the Governor's proposal, [S.B. 1122](#) proposal covers more diagnoses and makes this a permanent program instead of a two-year pilot.
- **Limit Inappropriate Nursing Home Placements:** The Committee accepted the Governor's proposal to implement a state-of-the-art online screening system to identify persons with mental illness and mental retardation and place them in the community instead of institutional settings. The proposal also would fund five new positions in DSS to review nursing home finances in order to identify which facilities truly merit a hardship adjustment vs. those facilities that should be allowed to go out of business. This proposal is expected to have a net savings of \$12.1 million over the biennium.

### Next Steps

There is growing consensus that CT faces an \$8 billion budget hole, not \$6 billion as estimated by the Governor in February. CAHCH will continue to analyze the budget and will keep you informed as we learn more details. We thank those members who made contact with Appropriations Committee.

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