

April 27, 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 an update on [S.B. 1122](#) and the Republican Budget Alternative. 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 Kristen LaCosse at licosse@cahch.org.

Feature Issue - SB 1122 Referred to Appropriations Committee

[S.B. 1122](#), An Act Concerning Changes to the Human Services Statutes, was referred to the Appropriations Committee on April 23, 2009. Since the Committee failed to act on the bill within a week, the bill has died in committee. [S.B. 1122](#) contained major parts of CAHCH's 2009 Legislative Agenda, including: Medicaid rate increases, coverage for flu shots and telemonitors and expansion of the funding for the Long Term Reinvestment Account.

CAHCH has received indications that the telemonitor and flu shot provisions are likely to make it in to other bills. The Medicaid rate increases have fallen victim to the continuing deterioration in the State's tax revenues. CAHCH will continue to argue that this bill is budget neutral in the biennium and will facilitate major savings in the out years. Failure to enact this bill will result in an increase in persons being directly admitted to nursing homes. In addition, CT could lose up to \$7.3 million in additional federal funds in FY 2010 under the Money Follows the Person program if persons are not able to be transitioned home because of a lack of available providers in the community.

CAHCH is planning a press conference on May 4th at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford to highlight the need for action on Medicaid rate increases.

Republican Budget Alternative

On Thursday, April 16th, Republicans proposed a two-year, \$36.6 billion alternative state budget. This budget would rely on extensive cuts in spending in lieu of imposing higher taxes. According to the non-partisan Office of Fiscal Analysis, it would cut gas taxes, eliminate a business tax and balance the budget by offering thousands of state employees an early retirement plan that will reduce spending by \$163 million next year. This alternative would also allow hundreds of seniors to receive home care for a savings of \$17 million. (Money Follows the Person)

Senate President Williams and House Speaker Donovan held a joint press conference on Thursday, April 16th in response to the alternative Republican budget. Below are some of the main points:

Speaker Donovan:

- He was pleased that the Republican's numbers matched the Democrat's numbers for the first fiscal year, but he was concerned about the numbers in year 2.
- He was concerned that the cuts made would jeopardize American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding.
- He was disappointed with the extensive cuts to the persistent offender program. He said that this was a bad idea from a public safety standpoint.

Senate President Williams:

- Cutting welfare and Medicaid with the Republican budget would cause Connecticut to lose out on \$1.5 billion from the federal stimulus package.
- He said that selling state assets, such as beaches and airports, is a terrible idea that would harm our future.
- The Republicans only acknowledge \$8.1 billion of the deficit, not the full \$8.7 billion which OFA has declared.

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

- Died in Appropriations Committee - see article above.

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

- Received a file copy and [Fiscal Note](#) and was referred to the Committee on General Law on April 21st. It received a Joint Favorable recommendation and has been sent to the House floor.

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

- Died in Appropriations. CAHCH strenuously opposed this bill.

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

- Moved out of the Joint Committee on Aging into the Committee on Human Services and has received revised language. It has now passed the Senate and is on the House floor.

[H.B. No. 6600](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUSTINET PLAN

- Tabled for the calendar in the House (awaiting further action).

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

- Section 16 contains CAHCH supported proposal to align State Licensure Inspection Cycle (every 2 years) with Medicare Survey Frequency (every 3 years).
- Received Joint Favorable recommendation from the Judiciary Committee and is awaiting further action on

House Floor.

[H.B. No. 1085](#) AN ACT CONCERNING HOMEMAKER AND COMPANION AGENCIES AND AUDITS FOR VENDOR FRAUD
- Died in Appropriations Committee

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The Connecticut Association for Home Care & Hospice | 110 Barnes Road | Wallingford | CT | 06492