



S.B. No. 244 AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM.

Good afternoon the Chairs of the Aging Committee Senator Hochadel and Representative Garibay, Vice Chairs Senator Miller, and Representative Fortier and Ranking Members Senator Seminara, and Representative Bolinsky. Thank you for your time today.

My name is Maureen McIntyre and I'm the CEO of the North Central Area Agency on Aging. My agency is proud to be a member of AgingCT, the association of the five statewide Area Agencies on Aging; we are five agencies with one mission.

It should come as no surprise that AgingCT strongly supports the philosophy behind **S.B. No. 244 AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM**. Since the inception of the program, AgingCT has served thousands of consumers on the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program. We have seen first hand and our data attests to the reduction in caregiver stress and the forestalling of nursing home placement while on the program.

The program has two features in particular that serve specific and important needs. First, the lack of an age requirement since Alzheimer's Disease quite famously does not discriminate by age. And secondly, that it is specifically for consumers who are not eligible for or active on Medicaid. The respite programs administered by AgingCT through Aging and Disability Services are the only options for this population that can not afford to pay privately but is not eligible for the Medicaid Waivers.

In fact, the Connecticut Statewide Respite Program acts as a very successful bridge for families who are awaiting Medicaid eligibility or ineligible for Medicaid. It has been a lifeline to stabilize consumers until longer term plans can be made. The CT Statewide Respite Program is the only opportunity for these folks to receive care. Therefore, the true need, is non-Medicaid funding.

If Medicaid eligibility is a requirement to serve individuals in the 1115 waiver, it is our belief that it would not be the answer to the problem we're collectively seeking to solve. Older adults with Alzheimer's Disease who meet the criteria of the CT Home Care Program, already have access to that Medicaid waiver, in fact approximately 30% of CHCPE consumers have Alzheimers Disease; so the exercise of writing and submitting a new waiver would not have the desired benefit of expanding the Statewide Respite Program and would be redundant to the CT Home Care Program for Elders.



Also, since this legislation does an excellent job of memorializing the Department of Aging and Disability Services' authority over the implementation and oversight of the Program, adding a waiver under the Department of Social Services would likely add to the fragmentation of service delivery this legislature has made great strides to address.

The issue of adding funding is of course driving this legislation; the desire to leave no stone unturned particularly as the American Respite Plan Act funds come to an end.

AgingCT respects and shares this concern and will work with the Department of Aging and Disability Services to maximize available funding and, should opportunities arise, we will support the Department's grant-writing efforts to seek additional dollars.

We stand ready to support this committee's continued efforts to expand this important program through appropriate pathways and offer guidance and recommendations as possible.

AgingCT's Service Navigators were most presciently put in place by this legislature to guide families through the myriad services across multiple systems. We will continue to do just that, no matter where the road takes us. Thank you for your attention and your passion for serving families at their most vulnerable.

Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging collaborate under the name, AgingCT. We are independent, nonprofit organizations, with federal designation, dedicated to help older adults and persons with disabilities thrive in the community with dignity and support throughout their lives. We advocate and educate legislators, policy makers and Connecticut residents on the issues of importance to older constituents and those who support them. Visit www.agingct.org to learn more.

Submitted by:

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On behalf of AgingCT