

STATEWIDE COALITION OF PRESIDENTS OF RESIDENT COUNCILS

Hello my name is Brian Capshaw and I live at the nursing home Greensprings Healthcare and Rehab in East Hartford. I'm submitting/testifying on behalf of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils representing all 26,000 Connecticut nursing home residents, of which approximately 17,000 receive a personal needs allowance (PNA) under Medicaid.

Senator Flexer, Representative Serra and distinguished members of the aging committee. As a nursing home resident I'm pleased to be here to discuss H.B. 6893. In the 2011 budget we shared in the states sacrifice and took what was listed as temporary, a \$9 reduction in our PNA down to \$60 a month. We understand fiscal times are tough. We thank you for proposing to increase the PNA to \$65.

Ideally we would like to see the reduction from 2011 restored and the cost of living adjustments (COLA) social security recipients received the last four years given to nursing home residents on Medicaid. In 2012 the cola was 3.6%, 2013 1.7%, 1.5% 2014 and 1.7% in 2015. With the \$9 restoration and cost of living adjustments given our monthly allowance would be about \$75. But with these tough fiscal times any increase would be appreciated. Keep in mind Connecticut is the 2nd most expensive state to live in behind Hawaii, our PNA level ranks us 10th behind 9 other states.

What would an increase mean to a nursing home resident? Something's you may take for granted, a meal ordered out, a cold soda in the afternoon, a new shirt/blouse or maybe just a bag of bird seed so a resident can watch the birds out of his/her window. What does it mean to me, I can continue with my monthly haircuts, have the ability to order a pizza and keep my cell phone.

We understand this will come with a price tag, but DSS has been sending less Medicaid dollars to nursing home operators as we have turned over our social security increases as cost of care, over \$19 million over the last 4 years.

You're not alone in this effort, in the last two years Colorado raised their PNA by \$25 to \$75, Maryland by \$7 to \$75, Minnesota by \$6 to \$95, New Hampshire by \$9 to \$65 and Ohio has given their residents a \$5 increase each of the last two years. Currently Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York and New Mexico all have pending legislation to raise their states PNA. I urge you to join these other states from across the country and appropriate an increase in our PNA.

Last year this committee graciously passed on a bi-partisan vote 11-0 a PNA bill and it died in appropriations. We've already spoken to two members of the appropriations committee, Senator Bye and Representative Walker and hope it does not happen this year.

I'd like to thank the committee for your time and consideration. I hope you will come together and pass this increase for Connecticut's nursing home residents who rely on Medicaid and the PNA for the little extras most people take for granted.