

## 2015 White House Council on Aging

Good morning my name is Brian Capshaw, I'm a nursing home resident from East Hartford, Connecticut. I've been advocating on behalf of nursing home residents in Connecticut for four years and would like to touch on Long Term Services and Supports, specifically nursing homes.

I think everyone would like to stay in the community, in that familiar environment, but as we age certain tasks become harder and harder to do. The memory may start to go, dementia may set in and often a family has to face the fact that mom or dad can't live alone by themselves anymore. I had to face this fact myself. After a 1994 car accident that left me paralyzed from the chest down, I was able to live independently for 10 years before health issues arose, after several surgeries, hospital stays and attempts at home care in late 2007 my doctor said I could not live on my own any more, so a skilled nursing facility was recommended. After 7 plus years in a nursing home I've realized that even with Connecticut's rebalancing efforts, nursing homes are still needed and improvements are needed to maintain the high quality of care that family members and residents expect. As the resident council president for my facility, I get tired of hearing about staffing issues, such as, "I could not get up for lunch because there was not enough staff today." With today's high acuity levels in skilled nursing facilities, the statement "staffing to meet the needs of the residents" doesn't work, Residents are being harmed because of the lack of staffing, aides trying to transfer residents by themselves when the care plan calls for two aides to assist the resident and a fall occurs. I feel at the federal level a national standard based on Hours per Resident per Day (HPRD) needs to be set. I don't see that happening in the near future so it must be done at the state level. We currently have HB 6690 An Act Concerning Nursing Home Facility Minimum Staffing Levels which changes Connecticut's low level of 1.9 to 2.3 which is a good first step. We're hopeful it will pass this year. I'm also concerned about residents' quality of life and resident care issues not being addressed through the survey and enforcement process. There are too many issues classified as minimal harm and few residents affected, and they are not addressed. Nursing home operators and administrators consider these isolated incidents. In my opinion there are far too many isolated incidents. The Department of Public Health recommended an increase the state civil monetary penalties (CMP's) this year, so nursing home operators will take a better look at their operations and reduce these so called isolated incidents. Unfortunately the Public Health Committee passed on HB 6887. In long term care facilities a number of states have passed or are looking at legislation that allows residents or family members to install electronic monitoring devices in rooms. Cameras or I like call them the eyes that never shut will put direct care workers on notice that they are being watched at all times, I think cameras can help improve quality of care if the resident chooses to use a one. The Public Health Committee also passed on HB 5270 which would have required nursing homes to electronically monitor non verbal residents. I'm hoping this will be brought up again next year and it will allow any resident or concerned family member to monitor their loved one in a long term care facility.