

CAHCF/CCAL

Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities
Connecticut Center for Assisted Living

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Written testimony of Matthew V. Barrett, President and CEO of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities and the Connecticut Center For Assisted Living (CAHCF/CCAL) concerning H.B. No. 5204 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION FOR NONAMBULATORY NURSING HOME RESIDENTS.

Good morning Senator Slapp, Representative Serra and to the distinguished members of the Aging Committee. My name is Matt Barrett. I am the President and CEO of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF), our state's trade association and advocacy organization of one-hundred and sixty skilled nursing facilities and assisted living communities. Thank you for this opportunity to testify concerning H.B. No. 5204 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION FOR NONAMBULATORY NURSING HOME RESIDENTS.

This well-intended bill would require nursing homes, with available vehicles equipped to transport non-ambulatory residents, to provide nonemergency transportation of non-ambulatory residents to the homes of family members. The bill further provides that the transportation would only be required when the family visits are in the same municipality as the nursing home, the transportation is approved by a physician, and that the charge for such transportation to the non-ambulatory resident doesn't exceed the nursing home's cost of providing the transportation.

We are not aware of any limitation under the law or practices governing nursing homes that today would cause a nursing home to prevent family visits of residents when arranged by family members and where the costs are addressed by the family or the resident. Such family visits are routinely provided today. Payment is arranged between the transportation provider and the family or resident in the current practice. In addition, we see such visits as fully consistent with a nursing home resident's rights as a member of the nursing home community.

We believe the committee understands that transportation unrelated to a medical issue is not part of the reimbursement structures now in place for nursing homes under the various payer sources, such as Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance. This is why families or residents who now arrange, privately pay and enjoy such visits are an important feature of the current practice. However, HB 5204 goes further by requiring, in all instances, that the nursing home actually provide the non-medical transportation with its own resources when an appropriate vehicle is available and then the nursing home invoice and collect the costs of the transportation from the family or resident. This adds unreimbursed administrative costs to the nursing home and extends liability when the nursing home is the transportation provider. Nursing homes that wish to assume these costs and liabilities may do so, and while CAHCF supports this bill in concept, we

recommend this provision be permissive, not mandatory, for a nursing homes to provide transportation under these circumstances.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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