

CAHCF/CCAL

Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities
Connecticut Center for Assisted Living

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Written testimony of Matthew V. Barrett, President/CEO of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities and the Connecticut Center For Assisted Living (CAHCF/CCAL)

Good afternoon Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and to the distinguished members of the Public Health 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 submit testimony concerning **H.B. No. 6666 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATUTE**

The comprehensive bill, among other things, is intended to codify several agency orders issued by the Commissioner of Public Health under a public health emergency and civil preparedness authority granted to the commissioner in the Governor's Lamont's Executive Order No. 7K, which we support.

CAHCF/CCAL recommends revisions to the language codifying the Commissioner of Public's Health Order dated May 22 concerning the position and space between beds found in Section 54 of the bill.

The Commissioner's order that there should be "a least six feet of space between beds" was to "...allow beds to be positioned in a manner to promote resident care, provided the facility ensures the following requirements are met: the bed position does not act as a restraint; the call bell, over bed light and privacy curtain are of functional use to the resident; and the position of the bed does not create a hazard, i.e. against a heating source, create an entrapment possibility or create an obstacle to evacuation. The existing regulations address a three-foot clearance on the sides and the foot of the resident's bed. As drafted the language in Section 54 does not mirror the situational guidance in the Commissioner's order and should be corrected.

We believe that the order of the Commissioner appropriately applies current general guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concerning six-foot social distancing to specifically prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Because it cannot be known if a six-foot clearance will be bed positioning guidance in a future pandemic and public health emergency, we therefore recommend that the language be modified to authorize general implementation of federal and state public health guidance, but without the specific reference to a six-foot clearance. Finally, any adopted language should be clear that a six foot clearance on both sides and at the foot of the bed provision be applicable only to future new construction of resident rooms.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify on the bill as drafted. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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