

# The Connecticut General Assembly



March 26, 2008  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS: Larry Perosino  
860/240-0144

Derek Slap  
240-8641

## **NURSING HOME STAFFING TO GET INCREASED**

Speaker of the House Jim Amann (D-Milford) and Senate President Donald E. Williams (D-Brooklyn) announced a plan to increase funding for nursing homes for the purpose of raising the current statutory minimum staff-to-resident ratio from 1.9 to 4.2 hours of care per day. Governor M. Jodi Rell proposed no increase for nursing homes in her budget presented to the Legislature in February.

“If you have a loved one in a nursing home, you should not be expected to have to make sure they are receiving the proper number of hours of care each day,” Amann said.

“When placing a loved one in the care of others, their safety and quality of care should never have to come into question.”

“We haven’t improved our staffing levels in decades,” Williams said. “Surely our seniors deserve better care. This change will improve the quality of life for thousands of seniors across Connecticut. Friends and relatives of nursing home residents should be comforted that under this proposal their loved ones are far more likely to get the care they need and deserve.”

Legislative leaders are looking to add \$9.5 million for the fiscal year beginning July 1 to increase staffing. Under the plan, increased nursing home staffing requirements would be phased in to 3.5 hours of care per day on October 1, 3.9 hours on January 1 and 4.2 hours on May 1, 2009. Staffing level requirements haven’t been updated in 25 years.

“This is a significant improvement to the staffing ratio at our nursing homes,” said House Majority Leader Christopher G. Donovan (D-Meriden). “It means more quality time spent with patients – which is good for the residents and eases stress on family members who entrust their loved ones to these facilities.”

The new 4.2 hours of care per day requirement will equate to at least one full-time nurse's aide for each five residents during the day, one aide per 10 residents in the evening and one aide per 15 residents during the overnight shift.

“Months ago we proposed a comprehensive Nursing Home Accountability Act and the need to increase staffing levels is a fundamental part of this,” said Senate Majority Leader Martin Looney (D-New Haven). “Nursing homes must be accountable in how they provide care and manage their finances.”

There are currently 240 nursing home facilities in the state serving approximately 27,000 residents. The National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform recommend a standard of 4.13 hours of care per resident day. It is estimated that staffing levels in Connecticut currently average 3.4 hours. The changes being sought by the leaders would impact an estimated 134 homes when fully implemented.

Legislative leaders were joined at a State Capitol new conference by a coalition of nursing home advocates including the Connecticut Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, the national Center for Medicare Advocacy and the New England Health Care Employees Union District 1199.

##