

## **Testimony to the Human Services Public Hearing on February 7, 2023.**

Good afternoon, Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and members of the Human Services Committee.

AgingCT is the Association comprised of the five regional Agencies on Aging. Established under the Older Americans Act, AgingCT is designated as the State's Health Insurance Program providing information, assistance, and support to Medicare beneficiaries. AgingCT blends funding from the Administration of Community Living with State funds to support older adult, caregivers and persons with disabilities in their efforts to live with independence in the care setting of their choice.

### ***Raised Bill 947, An Act increasing the minimum amount of resources a community spouse of an institutionalized Medicaid recipient may retain.***

AgingCT supports Raised bill 947. Increasing the minimum amount of resources a community spouse of an institutionalized Medicaid recipient may retain relieves some of the financial pressure faced by the community-dwelling spouse. A relatively small \$10,000 increase should have a minimal effect on the State budget while maximizing the community-based spouse's ability to care for themselves in the setting of their choice. The required comparative reporting between 2023 and 2024 allows for evaluation and confirmation of the proposal's impact.

***Proposed Bill 58, An Act concerning conservator compensation by Medicaid applicants and recipients.*** AgingCT supports Proposed Bill 58. Conservator and probate court fees are a necessity for individuals in need of oversight for their personal affairs or finances. As such, these fees should be disregarded from the income or assets of a Medicaid applicant in much the same way that medical expenses are disregarded from applied income.



**Raised Bill 946, *An Act concerning the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly.*** AgingCT does not support Raised Bill 946. The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly currently offers mental health counseling as part of its service menu to enrolled clients. In addition, the clients are supported by highly trained care managers who are required to have a degree in social work, nursing or related field. Care managers are client advocates and address the changing needs of clients through care planning and financial eligibility supports. Equally important to a robust safety net for adults at-risk of nursing home placement is maintaining fair and equitable reimbursement for Providers in the Medicaid waiver space. Equitable reimbursement will provide capacity for the social work, personal care attendants, homemakers, home health aides, nurses, etc. to support over 15,000 clients who receive long term care supports through the CT Home Care Program for Elders. Reimbursement for care to spouses may adversely cause some families to exceed maximum Medicaid income/assets for beneficiaries. Economic incentives may entice some caregivers to take on an additional burden to an already stressed family unit. The Adult Family Living service available under the CT Home Care Program provides stipends to other family members (excluding legally liable relatives) with the support of nursing and supervisory services to ensure the efficacy of the care plan and the safety of the client. Additional research is needed to ensure that it is not a duplication of effort nor an incentive to overwhelm a community spouse who is probably an elder themselves already providing familial support and care.

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