



## **HB 1170, relative to licensure of home health care providers**

**Testimony Presented by  
Susan Young, Executive Director, Granite State Home Health Association**

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My name is Susan Young, and I am Executive Director of Granite State Home Health Association, the government relations affiliate of the Home Care Association of New Hampshire, which represents licensed providers of home health care services, including the state's visiting nurse associations.

We asked Representatives Millham and Harding to file this bill in an effort to reduce regulatory burden for both home health providers and the Department of Health and Human Services, which is responsible for surveying healthcare facilities to assure compliance with state licensing and federal Medicare regulations. We believe that reducing the frequency of on-site surveys will result in administrative savings for all involved, with no negative impact on the health or safety of patients.

Currently, state law requires that the Department of Health and Human Services perform annual on-site surveys of licensed health care facilities, including those home health agencies that are not Medicare-certified. Under that law, residential care facilities that are deficiency-free for two consecutive years are entitled to a one-year waiver from the annual survey requirement, provided that the facility is not the subject of a founded complaint investigation, the facility remains under the same administrator who is responsible for its day-to-day operation, and the facility remains under the same director of nursing if such a position exists. HB 1170 simply seeks to extend this opportunity for a one-year waiver to home health agencies.

Granite State Home Health Association believes that HB 1170 will save home health agencies and the Department of Health and Human Services resources at a time when such resources are severely limited without adverse impact to patients. Indeed, Medicare-certified home health agencies, which are governed by federal regulation, are already surveyed at intervals of up to 36.9 months, with 5 percent of agencies surveyed more frequently on a random basis, and there has been no adverse impact to patients as a result of the less frequent surveys.

While we support HB 1170 as introduced, we would also support referral of the bill to a subcommittee for consideration of two possible changes. First, many of our members also

operate licensed adult medical day care programs, and we would support including adult medical day care programs in the bill. Second, we believe it would be worthwhile to explore whether state law should require that a facility be 100% deficiency-free in order to qualify for the one-year waiver, as is currently the case, or whether those deficiencies that are truly minor in nature and have no impact on patient safety or quality of care should not be considered when making a waiver determination.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this legislation. We look forward to working with you, the bill sponsors, and the Department should you send HB 1170 to a subcommittee for further consideration.