



# Legislative Bulletin

March 15, 2013

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## **ACTION ALERT!**

### **Contact Your State Senators**

Two important bills that the Association supports go to the Senate floor for a full vote on Thursday, March 21st. **Please contact your State Senator by Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> and ask them to support passage of SB 87 and SB 170.**

Click [here](#) for the contact information for your State Senator. You can call them at home in the evening or weekend, at their State House Office during the day, or send them an email. Phone calls are more effective!

### **SB 87 is GSHHA's Top Priority**

**SB 87, relative to the Patient Bill of Rights**, was introduced by Senator Peggy Gilmour at GSHHA's request. This bill clarifies that home health agencies are not subject to RSA 151:21 (the Patient Bill of Rights for facilities) and are only subject to RSA 151:21-b, (the Home Care Clients' Bill of Rights.) The bill also outlines requirements for written notice for discharge of home care clients and allows a home care provider to discharge a client immediately if the home is unsafe or not free from sexual or other forms of harassment.

The bill, as originally introduced, received opposition from disabilities rights advocates. GSHHA met with opponents and worked with Sen. Gilmour to address many of their concerns through an amendment. This [amendment](#) was approved by the Senate Health and Education Committee with a bi-partisan vote of 5-0.

## Talking Points on SB 87

- Ask Senators to vote **SB 87** as “ought to pass with amendment.”
- SB 87 is important to home health agencies because **it clarifies that New Hampshire’s home health agencies must give clients the “Home Care Clients’ Bill of Rights”** and *not* the “Patient Bill of Rights” that applies to hospitals and nursing homes.
- SB 87 establishes **reasonable requirements** for home health agencies to give clients **advance written notice of discharge**.
- SB 87 is essential to **protect home health workers from threatening situations**. It allows an agency to discharge a client immediately if the client’s home is unsafe or not free from harassment.

## SB 170 Will Simplify Advance Directives

GSHHA supports **SB 170, relative to advance directives pertaining to life-sustaining treatment**. This bill simplifies New Hampshire’s advance directives statutes. Current law *excludes* “medically administered nutrition and hydration” from the definition of life-sustaining treatment and requires the individual to answer questions specific to the topic of medically administered nutrition and hydration. SB 170 would *include* “medically administered nutrition and hydration” in the broad definition of “life-sustaining treatment” and repeal the confusing questions. The Senate Health and Education Committee recommended SB 170 as “ought to pass with amendment.” Read [SB 170 with the Senate amendment](#).

### Talking Points on SB 170

- Ask Senators to **vote SB 170** as “ought to pass with amendment.”
- SB 170 is a good bill because **it eliminates confusing questions** in New Hampshire’s statutory advance directive form and **will make it easier for citizens to complete advance directives**.
- People completing advance directives **can still write specific instructions for life-sustaining treatment** that is consistent with their wishes, values or religious beliefs.

## House Begins Work on State Budget

The House Finance Committee began holding public hearings throughout the State to gather the public’s input on the State Budget. **GSHHA’s Gina Balkus [testified](#) at the House hearing in Nashua on March 11**. Additional hearings will be held March 18<sup>th</sup>, 5pm – 8pm at the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center in Claremont and Rochester Community Center, Rochester.

Governor Hassan's budget included \$80 million in revenues from licensing one large casino in the State. The House has chosen to exclude that revenue from the budget until such time as a casino bill passes the Legislature. A gambling bill will likely pass the Senate, but it's a toss-up in the House. Stay tuned!

**If you have questions about state or federal legislative issues, call GSHHA at 603-225-5597 or email [Gina Balkus](#).**