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TO: The Honorable Toni Nathaniel Harp
The Honorable Toni E. Walker
Co-Chairs, Appropriations Committee

Members, Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Anthony J. Musto
The Honorable Peter A. Tercyak
Co-Chairs, Human Services Committee

Members, Human Services Committee

FROM: Michael P. Starkowski, Commissioner

DATE: March 21, 2011

RE: The Connecticut Home Care Program or Elders Annual Report for
SFY 2009

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 17b-342(g), I am writing to advise you that the most recent Annual Report to the Legislature on the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders is posted on the Department of Social Services website at www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.asp?a=2352&q=390776, or www.ct.gov/dss, click on "Publications" and then follow the link for reports.

In the interest of cost savings, we are not distributing hardcopies of the report, and I hope this will not present an inconvenience to you and your staff. The report itself is extensive and voluminous, per the statutory requirements. It includes comprehensive financial data, including service claims that can take up to a year to complete before they can be compiled and analyzed.

The Connecticut Home Care Program exemplifies the state's longstanding commitment to comprehensive community-based care for elder persons in need of long-term care. By providing for supportive services at home, the state has helped to preserve the dignity and autonomy of older persons and has assisted families struggling to maintain older relatives at home.

Development of home care options has helped curb the spiraling costs of institutionalization. However, the program's most important impact has been on the quality of life for Connecticut's older citizens.

The program combines federal and state funds to efficiently and cost-effectively serve elders according to their needs. Care plans are developed according to the clients' needs within the limits of 25%, 50% and 100% of the average nursing facility cost. The cost depends upon which Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders functional category corresponds to the individual's needs. This report describes the criteria for each category served by the program.

This report year was the fourth of a five-year renewal for the Home and Community Based Services Waiver.

While the report itself covers SFY 2009 in detail, I would like to take this opportunity to outline several significant events that occurred in the Home Care program more recently.

The Department of Social Services continued to work collaboratively with the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the Department of Public Health and the Office of Policy and Management, to implement the Assisted Living Demonstration Pilot Project. By offering assisted living services in the demonstration programs, residents are offered a viable choice that will allow them to maintain a degree of continued health, dignity and independence at significantly less cost than a nursing home. Four sites, The Retreat in Hartford, Herbert T. Clark in Glastonbury, Luther Ridge in Middletown and Smithfield Gardens in Seymour are fully operational. Under the umbrella of the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, 75 clients are receiving assisted living services in private assisted living facilities. More than 200 clients were provided with assisted living services in state-funded congregate and HUD communities.

There were two major changes in 2010 to the Home Care Program. The first added personal care assistance as a service under the program, and the second created a cost-sharing requirement for state-funded, non-Medicaid program participants.

Public Act 09-64 added personal care assistance as a home care program service. To accomplish this, a waiver amendment request was submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and approval was received on June 26, 2010. Consequently, the waiting list that existed under the personal care assistance pilot program was eliminated and everyone on the waiting list was offered personal care assistance services. On August 9, 2010, CMS approved a five-year renewal of the waiver program. In the renewal, an option was added to include agency based as well as fully self-directed personal care assistance services.

The second change was the initiation of a 15% cost-sharing requirement for state-funded clients, effective January 1, 2010, as part of the mid-term budget adjustments. Section 21 of Public Act 10-79 reduced the share to 6%, effective July 1, 2010. This change has resulted in the discontinuance of more than 400 state-funded clients in nine months. At this writing, the program is serving approximately 15,000 people.

In October 2007, the DSS Alternate Care Unit, under PA 07-2, Section 29 implemented a pilot program, the CT Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities, for up to 50 clients ages 18-64, funded with \$720,000 in state appropriations. The target population is individuals with degenerative, neurological conditions who are not Medicaid-eligible and who are in need of case management to develop, implement and monitor plans of care. Currently, 50 clients are being served under the program. There is a waiting list for this program that averages over a year.

As Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, I am proud of the proactive role the Department has taken in developing innovative and effective policies and programs in order to accommodate the needs of our elderly and disabled citizens. It is critical that we continue to develop accessible and cost effective services in order to meet these growing needs.

If you would like further information, please contact my office.

Thank you and regards.

cc: Ben Barnes, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management