



# Capitol Focus

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## Politics Online: Fast & Updated Information

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*Capitol Focus* is a weekly activities summary of the Colorado Legislature for CAHSA members, provided by staff of the Colorado Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. Contact Laura Landwirth, executive director, at [cahsa@cahsa.org](mailto:cahsa@cahsa.org).



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*What's new at the Capitol?*

*What is the Governor up to?*

*Who are my legislators?*

What a difference a week makes. HB 1053, Concerning Community Long-Term Care Services, sponsored by Rep. Jim Riesberg and Sen. Betty Boyd, was heard in the House Health & Human Services (HHS) Committee on Monday night. While the hearing started at 1:30 in the afternoon, it took until after 7:30 pm before the bill was presented and testimony heard. This bill is the result of a concept paper that was developed following discussion re' our 2010 advocacy agenda at CAHSA's board retreat last June.

We have advocated for parity in funding of community long-term care programs since the creation of the 50a Task Force developed following a footnote to the FY 2000 long bill. That footnote directed the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to examine rate disparities and shortfalls in the long-term care system. In addition to funding increases, the Task Force recommended looking at other types of reimbursement methodology for community long-term care programs. To date, these studies have not been done.

In 2005 we were an active proponent of SB 173. SB173 took the 50a Task Force work beyond rate disparity issues and looked at broader reforms. The 2005 Colorado legislature created a 22-member SB 173 Long-Term Care Advisory Committee to recommend programs and program modifications to improve the delivery of long-term care services across the state. After a careful review of other state models for reform, eighteen recommendations were developed that were research-driven, client-focused and ensured that Medicaid funds are used cost-effectively. Most of those recommendations, however, have not been implemented. One of the recommendations was to institute rate-setting and financing reforms to achieve equity in reimbursement based on the scope of services provided in each care setting. The recommendation specified development of a tiered reimbursement rate schedule for alternative care facilities based on residents' acuity levels and an independent study to estimate and model cost savings to be achieved by this type of methodology. We have continued to advocate for this type of study as well as the need to convene a stakeholder group to revisit the SB 173 recommendations and develop an implementation plan to move them forward.

Rep. Riesberg and Sen. Boyd agreed to sponsor a bill that would allow the department to accept outside "gifts, grants, and donations" to hire a consultant to develop a tiered rate reimbursement schedule and model the cost savings in accordance with the recommendation. Subsequently, HCPF proposed that the bill be expanded to allow for studies of any community long-term care programs and services to identify cost savings that may be achieved. Also, a new section was added to the bill to allow the Department of Human Services to accept "gifts, grants and donations" to study the cost savings associated with the Older Coloradans funded community-based programs. And....remember what I reported in last week's issue of *Capitol Focus* re' our unsuccessful effort on behalf of adult day programs? This week we successfully added a new section to HB 1053 which incorporates the directive to revise Medicaid regulations to allow day programs to use keypads on their doors to provide a safe environment for clients who may wander and place themselves at risk.

Thanks to CAHSA members Vennita Jenkins (The Granville Assisted Living Center), John Zabawa (Seniors' Resource Center) and Dr. Mary Tuuk (Total Longterm Care) for their testimony. Also, thanks to those who testified in support of the bill from the Alzheimer's Association Colorado Chapter, AARP, DRCOG, Colorado Senior Lobby, Older Coloradans Coalition, Home Care Association of Colorado, and Dixi Gloystein, retired HCPF ACF manager.

Next up is the House Appropriations Committee. Attached is a fact sheet on the bill and a legislative alert to contact your member of the House of Representatives to urge their support of the bill. Please contact me at [laura@cahsa.org](mailto:laura@cahsa.org) if you have any questions.