

# Lamont-Bysiewicz Transition Policy Committee Reporting Template

## Human Services (Social Determinants and Supports/Veterans Affairs Workgroup)

Members: Espirina Stubblefield, Derrick Gordon, Ph.D., Kevin Lenehan, William J. Hass, Ph.D.

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### **1. How do you propose the Lamont Administration should prioritize the policy goals in this area, and on what timeframe?**

Social determinants of health mandate that we consider the social and contextual factors that impact the health and well-being of all of Connecticut's citizens. As a result, interventions to increase the health and productivity of all Connecticut citizens must ensure that each citizen successfully and healthily matures through each developmental stage. This progress ensures that we have developed a viable and healthy workforce with minimal barriers to their productivity as they arrive at the young adult and older developmental stages. Priority should involve careful consideration of the factors associated with ill-health (broadly defined) and the areas where our citizens, across developmental and community contexts, have their health and well-being undermined. The CDC has identified 5 broad areas of focus: 1) neighborhoods and built environments; 2) health and health care services; 3) social and community contexts; 4) education; and 5) economic stability. A coordinated effort should be enacted to review these broad areas and identify how across systems we can work on improving these areas for all of Connecticut's citizens.

The goal of any human services programs offered by the State of Connecticut is to seamlessly support Connecticut's residents from conception to death. In doing so, we believe, that Connecticut can position itself to create a healthy and capable workforce. A healthy and capable workforce could result in better productivity, increased economic return for the State, and a more content constituent.

#### **The policy goal from a social determinant perspective is to:**

- Develop strategies to support our citizens at each stage of their development
- Promote the health (social, emotional, psychological, physical, economic) of every Connecticut citizen
- Equally consider the following developmental categories:
  - o Conception to birth
  - o Birth to three
  - o Pre-school age
  - o School age
  - o Adolescence/high school
  - o Young adulthood
  - o Adulthood
  - o Late adult life
  - o Old age

#### **For Seniors/Disabled Persons**

### **Priority 1**

**Help seniors age in place by expanding home- and community-based services.** (Maintain present services and gradually build the service and support platform during the 1<sup>st</sup> term)

1. The Rebalancing of Long-Term Services and Supports
2. Expand Affordable Housing:
3. Reduce the Number of Nursing Home Beds including a voluntary bed reduction option
4. Reduce the property tax burden on Connecticut's seniors and municipalities.
5. Provide adequate funding for Nutrition Services to the Elderly
6. Raise Medicaid Provider Rates: Strengthen the reimbursement rates of all providers
7. Develop the health care sector workforce, including the workforce needed to support our expanding system of long-term services and supports.
8. Increase availability and support for adaptive technology for the disabled.

### **Priority 2**

**Lower the price of prescription drugs** (start year 1 with a goal of significant reductions in year 3)

### **Priority 3**

**Guarantee the Affordable Care Act's protections in Connecticut law** (immediate and ongoing)

## **For Veterans:**

### **Priorities:**

1. Keep veteran's homelessness at bay
2. Fulfill the promise of no-cost higher education for veterans
3. Ensure that veterans and their spouses' professional licenses can cross state lines
4. Protect veterans' healthcare
5. Ensure veterans are properly treated in our housing, health care, and criminal justice systems
6. Fight back against the sham charities, predatory for-profit educators, fraudulent financial institutions and payday lenders that prey on our state's veterans
7. Reinvigorate programs that help returning veterans integrate into their communities and into our economy with good paying jobs.
8. Support full funding for veterans' burial services and our state cemeteries
9. Cut veterans' property taxes by preserving veterans' property tax relief measures and providing a meaningful property tax cut of \$1500 for everyone in Connecticut

## **2. The committee believes the following are achievable in the first 100 Days:**

The establishment of a working body to evaluate the needs of Connecticut citizens at each developmental stage, governmental and other structures that impact our citizens at each of these developmental periods, areas for cross-linkages that promote the health and well-being (broadly defined) of our citizens, and challenges experienced within and across the developmental spectrum.

Seniors: Priorities 2& 3  
Veterans: Priorities 1-5

**3. Which goals will require legislation to move forward?**

**Legislative actions:** Vets-Expansion of the veteran’s tuition credit program; licensure, fighting the sham charities and predatory practices targeting veterans; full funding for veteran’s burial services; and cut veterans property taxes. For Seniors: Aging in Place, Nutrition Services

**Administrative:** Vets- Continue policies regarding ending veteran’s homelessness; Seniors- protect their healthcare services and insurance coverage. Maintain services that have proven effective for all people in need.

**Fiscal Impact:** Additional Funds will be needed to increase services, offset by cost savings from fewer seniors/disabled occupying Nursing home beds.

**4. Are there specific challenges you can identify with regard to achieving the Lamont Administration’s goals and how would you suggest to address them?**

The anticipated challenges relate to 1) current practices within and across Connecticut state agencies; 2) sharing of resources across these agencies to achieve this goal; 3) potential challenges associated with data integration and linkages; 4) the delivery of services differently and slow adaptability across and within systems to be flexible and agile; 5) institutional resistance to change; and 6) fiscal resources to accomplish.

The strategy would be to follow these priorities and put the full power of the new Administration to work.

**5. How will the implementation of policy in this area create jobs and spur economic growth?**

Create jobs- increase in community services to the Elderly

Spur economic growth- allow the elderly to stay at home for as long as possible, thus reducing the cost of Nursing Home Care to the State.

Overall, the holistic concept of eliminating homelessness combined with supporting the legal/medical partnership that allows for veterans to receive their full federal entitlements puts those formerly unable to work in a position where they can work.

The implementation of training for veterans in the areas where there is a critical employee shortage (advanced machining; additive manufacturing; healthcare) will add personnel to the job roles, increase the tax base and spur local economic growth.

**6. Are there opportunities for cost savings for CT state government in the context of implementing this policy?**

Yes, allowing seniors the ability with community supports to age in place will reduce the high costs of nursing home care, thus reducing Medicare and Medicaid costs.

AARP statistics found:

Evidence suggests that programs that support aging in place may yield cost savings for families, government, and health systems.

More extensive research is needed to better account for all costs involved, because existing evidence often relies on small-scale case studies.

Aging in place has also been shown to have health and emotional benefits over institutional care.

With regards to Veterans: The Committee Recommends

- not including fees as part of the free veteran's tuition.
- phasing out the property tax credit above a certain adjusted gross income.
- The evaluation of the Rocky Hill facility and the eventual determination of its future may result in cost savings.
- An evaluation of all disabled veterans on state aid may allow for the shifting of some burdens to the federal government if the disability is service connected and compensable.

The committee does not recommend the state assume the full burden of paying veterans burial costs unless the veteran meets certain financial requirements.

**7. What examples of success from other states, countries, or the private sector in this policy area should the Administration study?**

- Village Movement of California( <https://homehealthcarenews.com/2018/09/more-seniors-age-in-place-thanks-to-growth-of-villages/>)
- Spousal licensing: Many states have a variety of policies. Information is available at <https://www.military.com/spousebuzz/blog/2014/09/44-states-now-offer-military-spouse-license-help.html>

**8. Are there any other areas /considerations you would like to highlight with regard to this policy area?**

Continue the **Governor's Nonprofit Health and Human Services Cabinet** initiated by Governor Malloy in 2011. The Cabinet works in tandem with members of state government to create efficiencies, cost saving measures and to increase communication among the nonprofit leaders and Agency Commissioners. See the link below to the website which contains the history and work of the Cabinet. <https://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2998&Q=490946>