



***Written Testimony before the Public Health Committee
Submitted by the Department of Social Services
March 22, 2023***

SB 9 AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS.

Section 2 of this bill would require the Department of Social Services (DSS) to adjust funding to FQHCs to enable same-day access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs). We support the policy goals of this section. However, we believe that this section is not necessary. As of May 1, 2022, and as outlined in [Provider Bulletin 2022-36](#) (Separate Reimbursement for Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives in the Medical Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Setting) and [Provider Bulletin 2022-79](#) (Additional Billing Guidance for Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptive Devices in the Medical Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Setting), DSS already pays for LARCs separate from each FQHC’s encounter rate for the purpose of providing same-day access. Given this existing policy, the Department sees this section as unnecessary.

Section 15 requires DSS to establish and administer a personal care attendants (PCAs) career pathways program to improve the quality of care offered by PCAs and incentivize recruitment and retention of PCAs; DSS is to report on the program by January 1, 2025. DSS supports the intent of this section, however, pursuant to CGS 17b-706a, PCA training and professional development are mandatory subjects of the collective bargaining process between SEIU 1199NE and the PCA Workforce Council, of which DSS is a member. Specifically, it states that 1199 has the right to bargain: “training, professional development and other requirements and opportunities appropriate for such personal care attendants.” Historically, training has been included in all versions of the collective bargaining agreement. Additionally, as authorized in CGS 17b – 706e, DSS, as the designated representative for the PCA Workforce Council, already has an established contract with the 1199 Training & Upgrading Fund (TUF) for the provision of training to the PCA workforce according to the terms set forth in Article 10 of the current collective bargaining agreement which is effective through June 30, 2023. The current contract provides \$750,000 per year for PCA orientation, training and skills enhancement. Per the collective bargaining agreement, these funds are allocated by a Training Fund Committee composed equally of 1199 Union members and members of the PCA Workforce Council, who represent the interests of the state and Medicaid participants who self-direct their own care and serve as the employers of record for the PCA workforce. Current trainings being offered through the collective bargaining agreement and the subsequent TUF contract include the development of a career ladder pathway for PCAs to become support and planning coaches, and other voluntary trainings established to improve the quality of care for Medicaid recipients including virtual

CPR, care for the caregiver, Alzheimer, fundamental skills, and others. Additionally, stipends are paid to PCAs for any voluntary training that is attended. Negotiation of the terms of the successor labor agreement between the PCA Workforce Council and SEIU 1199NE are actively underway and PCA training remains an allowable subject of bargaining. Training, including career laddering opportunities, are most appropriately handled through the established collective bargaining process as already contemplated in existing statute. Developing a parallel training and career laddering process would be duplicative and potentially undermine the collective bargaining process and the voice of the Medicaid participants for whom these individuals work. Thus, DSS opposes this section.