Representative Brian S. Dempsey  
Chairman, House Ways & Means  
State House, Room 243  
Boston, MA 02133

August 18, 2014

Dear Chairman Dempsey:

On behalf of nearly 200 home care providers across the state, their patients and employees, the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts is seeking your support for S.2348, An Act Relative to Home Health and Hospice Aides, which was recently referred to your committee.

This legislation would allow home health and hospice agencies to operate with more efficiency and flexibility by creating a process where registered nurses can delegate certain low-level medication administration tasks to a certified home health aide, hospice aide, or certified nursing assistant. The benefits are that the patient receives medication in a timely fashion by a trained aide under the oversight of both a nurse and the home health or hospice agency and the state can save money by paying an aide less for administering medications like eye drops, oral medication, ointments and medicinal patches rather than requiring a nurse to do the visit.

The Massachusetts Nurse Practice Act prohibits nurses in the home care setting from delegating such tasks, and it is time that we catch up of the rest of the country in this regard. In AARP’s 2014 Long-Term Care Scorecard, Massachusetts placed 40th in the category tracking the number of health maintenance tasks able to be delegated to long-term services and supports workers. S.2348 allows nurses to practice at the top of their license using all the skills, training and experience they have gained to deliver optimal care to their patients and help people remain in their homes.

For the second time, S.2348 unanimously passed in the Senate before arriving at your committee. We hope you will continue to advance this worthwhile proposal that is supported by the American Nurses Association – Massachusetts, the Organization of Nurse Leaders of MA/RI, the Home Care Aide Council, Mass Home Care and Commonwealth Care Alliance.

Please contact us with any questions and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia Kelleher  
Executive Director