

Home Care Alliance of MA Verbal Testimony
Joint Committee on Elder Affairs
7/31/17 Hearing
1PM State House Room A-2
Re: Home Care Licensure Bills

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony to the bills before the committee relative to licensure of home care agencies. My name is Tim Burgers and I am the Associate Director of the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts. We represent nearly 200 home care agencies throughout the commonwealth, with the mission of ensuring that home care is an integral part of the health care delivery system.

I am here today to provide testimony on bills H. 344, S. 2889, H. 341, and S. 364. All of these bills are relative to the licensure of Home Care Agencies. I will give you a brief overview of the private care industry and the Home Care Alliance's position on licensure before two of our members provide testimony as well.

Private duty home care serves as an alternative to long term nursing facilities and provides consumers with a variety of choices. It is a private, out-of-pocket service that can keep seniors in their homes, while assisting them with common household activities, companionship, and non-skilled care and keeping them safe. It is important to remember that private duty home care agencies receive no government funding.

The Home Care Alliance supports H. 344. For many years, the Home Care Alliance and our members have advocated for private care licensure, as we believe that agencies should be held to a baseline set of standards that would protect consumers, workers, and the agencies. We believe that H. 344 does so without significantly increasing operating costs for agencies.

It is important that we strike a balance between over burdening regulations for these private businesses while protecting those that they serve. If licensure were to impose onerous requirements on agencies, it would raise costs for the agency and thereby the consumer. This would inevitably grow the underground market, which is completely unregulated and poses risks to consumers.

I would like to emphasize that bills H. 2889, S 364, and H.341, require agencies who contract with the state's Aging Services Access Points program to submit annual cost reports. H.341 and S 364 also require any agency looking to conduct business in the commonwealth to disclose cost data, and minimum employee compensation. I would like to point out that agencies that contract with ASAPs already submit annual cost reports. And we see no public policy need for private pay agencies to submit operating cost data to the state. We believe disclosures for private pay agencies would be a violation of proprietary information.

I will hand it over to two of our member agency owners who have testimony on this issue but I thank you for the time, and for the committee's consideration.

Thank you.