

House Republican Press Release

July 17, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

GOV. RELL SIGNS LEGISLATION COSPONSORED BY REP. CARSON TO IMPROVE HOSPICE CARE



DANBURY, CT—On Tuesday, June 26, Governor Rell signed into legislation into law cosponsored by State Rep. Mary Ann Carson (R-New Fairfield) that will improve Hospice Care in Connecticut.

The new law (Public Act 07-23) is designed to help maintain continuity of care across all settings—including a patient’s personal residence, skilled nursing facilities and acute care settings. It also ensures that patients and families who choose hospice receive care by a State licensed and Medicare certified hospice agency. Only agencies that are licensed and certified as hospice providers may use the term “hospice” to describe their services. The bill prohibits all other organizations from using such terms as “hospice,” “hospice-like” or “hospice care program.”

Regional Hospice’s executive director, Maureen Moore said the legislation is needed in Connecticut.

“If a patient opts for hospice care in Connecticut, they should know that care can be provided by qualified personnel in all settings,” said Moore. “At Regional Hospice we recognize the importance of continuity of care, 24-hours a day, regardless of where the patient is residing. It is not unusual for a patient to need to be cared for in different settings at different stages of their illness.”

State licensed hospice agencies, such as Regional Hospice, offer patients and families expert care by an interdisciplinary team of nurses, home health aides, social workers, spiritual caregivers, volunteers and bereavement specialists. The focus is on the whole person, meeting his or her medical, emotional and spiritual needs throughout the stages of life-limiting illness. The agency’s team works closely with family members, and the patient’s primary physician.

As a member of Regional Hospice's New Fairfield Fundraising Chapter, Rep. Carson said she appreciates how much hospice services mean to patients and their families.

“I am pleased we were able to move this bill through the public health committee and legislature to ensure quality of care for hospice patients,” said Rep. Carson.