

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Acts Affecting Seniors



During the 2007 regular and special sessions of the legislature, a number of new laws affecting seniors were enacted.

A new law decreases, from 62 to 60, the age at which a driver can get a car insurance premium discount after successfully completing a Department of Motor Vehicles-approved accident prevention course. By law, the discount must be at least 5% and apply for at least 24 months. The driver must complete a course within one year before applying for an initial discount and, to obtain subsequent discounts, must complete a new course within one year of the current discount's expiration.

A new act (PA 07-130) establishes a Connecticut Home Care Option Program for the Elderly. It allows for the establishment of a trust fund to help people save for the costs of home health services not covered by a long-term health insurance policy or Medicare. This new act will help older citizens live in their homes or in a non-institutional setting as they age.

The budget act adds \$ 400,000 in each of FYs 08 and 09 for the Agriculture Department's Senior Farmers' Market Coupon Program. This program gives seniors vouchers for purchasing fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets.

Beginning October 1, 2007, a nurse employed by a licensed home health care or homemaker-home health aide agency can administer flu and pneumonia vaccines to patients in their homes (PA 07-9). The nurse may administer a vaccine without a physician's order, but must do so according to a physician-approved agency policy and only after first assessing the patient for contraindications. The act applies to registered, licensed practical, and advanced practice registered nurses.

A new act (PA 07-2) allows unlicensed residential care home employees to perform limited health-related activities for residents. Under this legislation, "assistive personnel" can obtain and record a resident's blood pressure and temperature with digital medical instruments. These assistive personnel can also obtain and document a resident's weight and help residents use glucose monitors to obtain and document blood glucose levels.

One budget item (PA 07-1) recently passed appropriates \$ 500,000 to DSS to support a fall prevention program. Fall-related injuries are a major cause of health care utilization and the leading cause of preventable nursing home placement among seniors.

Within available appropriations, the Extended Family Guardianship act directs the probate court administrator to establish an Extended Family Guardianship and Assisted Care Pilot Program in the New Haven regional children's probate court. The pilot program's purpose is to reduce the number of abused or neglected children placed out of their communities and in foster care by reaching out to local family members for appointment as guardians. The act makes each relative appointed guardian eligible for a grant of up to \$ 500 per child. The program must also recruit volunteers to help guardians provide care.

A new estate tax bill requires the revenue services commissioner, in consultation with the OPM secretary, to study and report on the estate tax. The study must include the tax's impact on the state's economic competitiveness and its ability to keep residents. The report must be submitted to the governor and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee by February 1.

These are some of the highlights of recently passed legislation affecting those age 60 or older. To get more complete information on any of these or other bills affecting seniors, please call my Hartford office at 1-800-842-1423.

*State Representative Marilyn Giuliano, Republican leader on the legislature's Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, represents the 23<sup>rd</sup> House Assembly District of Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook and coastal Westbrook.*