

Testimony to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee

February 12, 2016

S. 256, An act relating to extending the moratorium on home health agency certificates of need

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and
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The Division of Licensing and Protection licenses and regulates a variety of health care providers in the State to include hospitals, nursing homes, residential care homes, hospices and home health agencies.

This bill would extend the existing moratorium on home health agencies certificates of need until 2020. The CON process is directed by the Green Mountain Care Board and DAIL plays a small role in the process. As such, the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living does not object to this legislation.

We recognize the dynamic nature of health care reform and the complexity of its integration into the existing health care continuum. We have no evidence that the moratorium has had a negative effect on cost, quality or access.

We have had complaints from providers and consumers about staffing shortages. We recognize that there is a current direct care staffing shortage statewide and across multiple provider types. We have no evidence that lifting the current moratorium would ease this shortage. Rural areas across the US tend to have more access challenges due to staffing than more densely populated areas.

Vermont has created a unique system for home health service delivery. We have eleven agencies. Ten that serve a specific catchment area each and are obligated to provide designated services to all qualified individuals in their area. We also have one state wide home health agency. In our programmatic and regulatory experience, people have access to home health services and exceptions to this tend to be eligibility related or safety risk related.