

May 12, 2025

Thank you to the Joint Committee of Elder Affairs for allowing me the opportunity to testify today in support of House bill 781 and Senate bill 477, An Act establishing the program of all-inclusive care for the elderly.

My name is Matthew Chuckran, and I work with the Cambridge Health Alliance PACE program as the Outreach & Marketing coordinator. A large part of my role at PACE is describing what PACE does. As intimately familiar as I am with my program, this can oftentimes be the most challenging part of my job because structurally, PACE is a program that lends a different experience to the individuals that benefit from it. Our model of healthcare is holistic and takes into account the full spectrum of our participants' needs, managing all of them. And because of this scope, if you ask a PACE participant or a PACE participant's family member what PACE is, you will rarely, if ever, get the same answer twice. For the widow that was struggling to adapt to the loss of her lifelong companion, we are the day center where she has developed new relationships with others in similar situations. For the daughter who was teetering trying to balance work, raising her children, and caring for an elderly father with a declining memory, we are the partner assisted living he now safely calls home. For the couple struggling to manage their healthcare, their needs going unaddressed and missing appointments, we're the combination of the doctor, home service coordinator and scheduler, coordinating their care to bring everything together. We are all of these things, but all of these services, providers, and healthcare solutions are part of a larger patchwork that when pieced together, serves as the foundation that keeps our seniors healthy, independent and aging in place.

I see a parallel with the relationship between PACE and the communities we serve across Massachusetts. If you ask around your city or town, what is PACE?, you again will get a variety of responses, because we are so entrenched in our community institutions and health programs, and we are so diverse in the services we provide. You will find PACE at your local senior center running blood pressure clinics alongside community health workers. You will find PACE operating supportive housing floors at senior public housing buildings, providing on-site aide services. You will find PACE on the roads, shuttling our participants to and from medical appointments. You'll find PACE in family homes, low-income housing, independent livings, hospitals, short term rehabs, aquatic physical therapy classes, the list goes on. And again, we are all of these things. We are an indispensable part of a larger entity, tightly stitched into the Commonwealth's healthcare system, not only improving the lives of the seniors we serve, but the cities and towns they reside in.

Recognizing PACE in state statute is recognition of our status in the healthcare system and of the vital role that PACE holds in the well-being of our seniors, our cities, and the state of Massachusetts at large. And in a time of unprecedented uncertainty this is a step in ensuring that a program so imperative in the state's healthcare landscape, remains as certain as the service that we provide.