

**Visiting Angels Testimony**  
**Joint Committee on Aging and Independence Hearing**  
**04/14/2025**  
**10:00am State House Room A-1**  
**Re: H.789/S.470**

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Good morning,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of H.789/S.470, An Act to Improve Massachusetts Home Care, which would create a licensure system for non-medical home care services. My name is Larry Michel, my wife and I own two Visiting Angels offices located in Chelmsford and Newton. Together our offices provide non-medical home care services to over 20 communities including Boston, the Merrimack Valley from Dracut to Winchester, and MetroWest and southwest from Watertown to Stoughton. The population of the communities we serve is over 600,000 with a 65+ senior population of over 100,000 and growing. Our clients want to age safely in their homes with support from a caregiver. That support can range from one day a week for a few hours to help them around their home to as much as 24 hours per day 7 days per week to help them with everything from starting their day, getting dressed, personal care in the bathroom, preparing meals, medication reminders, getting to appointments, going to bed, and helping them multiple times in the middle of the night if they have to use the toilet.

We strongly support appropriate licensing for our business and the non-medical sector of the home care industry. As service providers, the needs of our customers and families, as well as our employees are our top priority. We all want our sector to be as safe and affordable as possible for our clients and our caregivers. To meet that goal, all providers must be covered and be required to meet the same baseline standards to keep home care safe for our customers, their families, and our caregivers, such as, minimum liability insurance for the workers and agency, workers compensation insurance in case of an injury, consumer rights and written care plans, complaint procedures, worker background checks, and training requirements.

We take great pride in offering robust training to our caregivers and our staff. We train annually on 1) Elder Abuse and Neglect; 2) HIPAA Caregiver Education; 3) Infection Control, Infectious Diseases and Blood Borne Pathogens; 4) Professional Boundaries, and 5) Observing and Reporting, and have over 100 training courses for our care professionals. We know that when our caregivers are properly trained, the quality of service increases for our clients. If all agencies are not held to the same standards, then the quality of service across the sector will suffer. This bill would help to weed out bad actors and bring stability to the industry. Remember that when we get a call from a spouse or family member it is almost always after an unanticipated event – a fall and hospitalization, a loved one wandering and getting lost followed by a dementia diagnosis, or a debilitating illness. At that time of stress and uncertainty, families should not have to worry that they called an agency that does not do background checks, does not have adequate insurance, and does not train their care professionals.

Lastly, it is important that if this bill were to pass, the regulations are not overly burdensome that they would raise costs for the agency and be passed on to the private-pay consumer. It's important to remember that licensure of these services will license provider home care agencies *regardless* of payor. Any burdensome or unnecessary regulatory structure runs the risk of 'pricing out' consumers from the private pay home care market. This would result in customers going to the underground unregulated market, which increases risk to the consumer, and defeats the overall goal of the bill.

I want to thank you all again for allowing me the opportunity to present today. I hope that you will consider passing this important piece of legislation.