



H. 609, An Act Relative to Promoting the Betterment of Resident's Health and Safety in Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Facilities

On behalf of the Massachusetts Senior Care Association representing approximately 400 long-term care facilities, caring for and employing nearly 150,000 individuals, we wish to testify in strong support of **House Bill 609, An Act Relative to Promoting the Betterment of Resident's Health and Safety in Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Facilities**, filed by Representative Denise Garlick. This legislation would direct the Department of Public Health's Division of Health Care Facility Licensure and Certification to report on and provide annual evidenced-based best practice training for skilled nursing facility staff on the most frequently cited regulatory deficiencies. We believe this type of interactive training, with the sharing of information and recommendations from a broad consortium of stakeholders - including government, academia, consumers, health care providers and other interested organizations - would better ensure quality resident care and safety.

Opportunities for high value education and training for skilled nursing facility staff is particularly important given the unprecedented fiscal challenges facing the Commonwealth's nursing facilities, which is leading to severe frontline staffing shortages and a decline in the quality of care provided to this frail and vulnerable population. We must utilize our nursing resources efficiently to provide a high level of resident care through appropriate collaboration and training.

Skilled nursing facilities and Massachusetts Senior Care Association work with community, health care and government partners on many issues related to quality care because we are driven by same goal -- providing the safest and best care to frail elders and people with disabilities who can no longer safely live in their homes. H.609 assures a collaborative effort between the Department and stakeholders where best practices are defined and communicated to create the best quality outcomes for residents, staff, and families.

Thank you for your consideration of our support for House Bill 609, An Act Relative to Promoting the Betterment of Resident's Health and Safety in Skilled Nursing. We hope this important bill will receive a favorable report from the Committee. Please contact Tara Gregorio, President, Massachusetts Senior Care Association at tgregorio@maseniorcare.org or 617-558-0202 if you have questions about this testimony.