

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE
State Representative Ruth Fahrbach



Summary of legislation passed
regarding seniors

The Legislature acted on a number of initiatives regarding senior citizens during the 2007 legislative session. As we continue to take a look at some of the key bills that came out of Hartford this year, here is a summary of some of the major pieces of legislation that will impact Connecticut's senior population.

The establishment of a Connecticut Home Care Option Program for the Elderly and a related trust fund allows people to save for future health-related expenses and to stay in their homes longer. Public Act 07-130 allows participants to establish individual savings accounts and for a designated beneficiary to withdraw funds from that account to pay for qualifying home health care expenses. The state comptroller administers the fund, and would be guided by a new 19-member advisory committee.

Public Act 07-9 will allow for nurses to administer flu and pneumonia vaccines to patients in their homes. Registered, licensed practical and advanced practice registered nurses are eligible to administer the vaccines.

Under Public Act 07-34, Alzheimer's special care units must provide at least one hour of Alzheimer's and dementia-specific training to all staff members on an annual basis. Any staff hired on or after Oct. 1, 2007 must receive this training within six months. The law already requires all licensed and registered direct care staff to receive at least eight hours a year in dementia-specific training and least two hours in pain recognition and administration of pain management techniques.

Fall-related injuries are a major cause of concern, and can often be prevented. Public Act 07-1 devotes \$500,000 to the Department of Social Services to fund a fall prevention program. More information on how to prevent falls can be found at the Centers for Disease Control website: www.cdc.gov/ncipc.

The age at which seniors can qualify for car insurance discounts was lowered from 62 to 60. Public Act 07-5 allows drivers to qualify for this discount after successfully

completing a Department of Motor Vehicles-approved accident prevention course. The law stipulates that discounts must be at least 5 percent, and should apply for a minimum of 24 months.

The 2008-09 state budget provides \$250,000 for Independent Transportation Network (ITN) grants. Half of the funds are for towns or non-profit organizations to develop and plan community-based regional transportation systems that, through a combination of private donations and user fees and paid and volunteer drivers, provide transportation to elderly people. The other half goes to the five towns that have already established ITN systems (Public Act 07-2).

In addition, the budget adds \$400,000 in 2008 and \$400,000 in 2009 for the Agriculture Department's Senior Farmers' Market Coupon Program. This program gives seniors vouchers for purchasing fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets.

If you would like a copy of any of these laws affecting seniors, you may call my office at 240-8700 or log on to our web site at www.cga.ct.gov.

Rep Ruth Fahrbach represents the 61st District, including Suffield, and parts of Windsor and East Granby, in the General Assembly.