

# REPRESENTATIVE GAIL K. HAMM.....Senior News Briefs

## **Senior Driving Insurance Discount**

Drivers aged 60 and up are now eligible for an automobile insurance policy premium discount after successfully completing a Department of Motor Vehicles approved accident prevention course. It is a great opportunity to stay safe and save money. For more information, contact AAA at (800) 842-4320 or AARP at (888) 227-7669. [PA 07-5](#)

## **Refunds of Prepaid Medicare Premiums**

No one should be penalized for prepaying a Medicare premium. If a Connecticut senior citizen cancels a Medicare Supplement Policy prior to its expiration date, they will receive a refund on any prepaid premiums, thanks to legislation adopted by the General Assembly. [PA 07-48](#)

## **Nursing Homes**

To protect our seniors, this bill prevents any nursing home, rest home, residential care home, or intermediate care facility from closing or greatly decreasing its total bed capacity until a public hearing has been held and the Department of Social Services' Commissioner has approved the facilities request. [PA 07-209](#)

## **Energy Assistance Program for the 2007-2008 Heating Season**

The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program and the Contingency Heating Assistance Program provide help to eligible households in offsetting winter heating costs. There is an income and liquid assets limit. To see if you qualify, dial 211 (Infoline) and select option #3. They will be able to answer your questions and refer you to the proper community action agencies for an application.

## **Connecticut Homecare Option Program**

To enable more seniors to live at home and delay the need for costly nursing home care, we have created the Connecticut Homecare Option Program. This program allows participants to make deposits into a Homecare Trust Fund account. Interest earned on fund accounts will be exempt from state income tax. The participant or a designated beneficiary can later withdraw funds to pay for qualified home care expenses. Any unspent account funds will become part of a beneficiary's estate when he or she dies. Additionally, to help encourage home care options, seniors can now hire their own personal care assistance attendants directly instead of going through a home health care agency. [PA 07-130](#)

## **Assisted Living**

Greater protection to assisted living residents will now be provided by having such facilities submit to additional rules and regulations. These facilities will need to provide each resident with a written service plan and, upon request, to arrange for the provision of outside medical services (physical and dental services, home health aide services, and hospice care), and to maintain written reports on the scope of services provided. Finally, no assisted living facility will control or manage the financial affairs or personal property of any resident. [PA 07-2](#)

## **Wheelchair Transfer Safety**

A new law requires that certain public transport vehicles with wheelchair lifts be equipped with a device that will secure wheelchairs to the lift. This will ensure that the wheelchair does not come off the lift while the person is being moved. This small, inexpensive measure will reduce incidents of injury. [PA 07-134](#)

**For more information, or if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me in Hartford at: 860-240-8500**

# Your Representative ....Your Voice

## Choices Health Insurance Assistance Program

The CHOICES program has recently played a crucial role in assisting seniors throughout the state. CHOICES stands for “Connecticut’s program for Health insurance assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling, and Eligibility Screening.” The CHOICES program now provides information and assistance as well as eligibility screening



(through Benefits Check-Up) for many federal and state programs and services, including long-term care and Medicare Part D, to older adults, persons with disabilities, their families, and professionals. This bill expands the statutory role of the Department of Social Services’ CHOICES health insurance assistance program

in publicizing information and providing advice to Medicare beneficiaries to specifically include the federal Medicare Part D prescription drug program and long-term care options in the state. The bill also requires CHOICES to collaborate with other state agencies and entities in developing consumer-oriented websites that provide information on Medicare plans, including Medicare Part D plans and available long-term care options. CHOICES can be reached toll-free at 1-800-994-9422. Or visit the Area Agency on Aging’s website at [www.ctagenciesonaging.org](http://www.ctagenciesonaging.org) for information about CHOICES and other helpful services. **PA 07-155**



## *Representative Gail K. Hamm*

***Representing the 34th District  
East Hampton - Middletown***

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