

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Contact: Danielle Faipler
(860)240-8790



House Passes Elderly Nutrition Funding Bill

HARTFORD — The House of Representatives unanimously passed legislation changing the name of the state Department of Rehabilitative Services to the Department of Aging and Disability Services, and increasing funding for elderly nutrition programs to ensure equitable rates for meals on wheels programs Monday afternoon.

“Malnutrition among older adults is a serious health crisis, and nearly 50 percent of seniors are vulnerable to becoming malnourished or are malnourished,” said **State Representative Michelle Cook, D Torrington**, who championed the inclusion of elderly nutrition programs in the bill, [HB 7163](#). “Malnourishment can lead to extensive and costly hospital visits due to health complications, which becomes burdensome for individuals living off fixed incomes. By increasing food security among senior citizens, this legislation will lead to better health outcomes.”

The bill increases the fee schedule for mobile elderly nutrition providers to match increases in the cost of living, and base funding off the elderly population data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. It also requires data collection on patient malnutrition to improve nutrition services, and increases the state Department of Social Services budget by 10 percent increase for waiver programs offering meals on wheels services.

“I am honored to work with **Rep. Cook** on this important issue,” said **State Representative Catharine Abercrombie, D – Meriden/Berlin**, who serves as House Chair on the legislature’s [Human Services Committee](#).

“This legislation is important for the future of meals on wheels. It has language that will increase funds each year with the cost of living. Address funding allocation and requires data collection about malnutrition,” said Joel Sekorski, Director of the Sullivan Senior Center in Torrington. “I am thankful to the legislators who have informed themselves and recognized the importance of elderly nutrition over the last few years culminating in the formation of this necessary legislation.”

Millions of Americans across the country struggle with food security and this legislation has garnered attention from the national [Defeat Malnutrition Today coalition](#), based in Washington, D.C.

According to a 2016 study on [food insecurity and malnutrition among seniors](#), 3 million households with seniors older than 65 years of age, and 1.2 million seniors living alone reported low access to nutrient-rich food due to restricted diets, decreased appetite, limited income and access to food. Food insecurity can lead to further health complications such as depression, weakened immune system, poor wound healing, decreased bone density and muscle weakness, and higher incidence of cardiovascular disease.

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