



THE GENERATIONS PROJECT

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For Immediate Release
March 8, 2004

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Home Health Care Reforms to Receive Legislative Scrutiny

New law will require state agency to report what it is doing to implement 2003's SEA 493

Indianapolis - Today, Indiana's leading advocates for long-term care reform praised legislation passed by the 2004 General Assembly to increase its scrutiny of the home health care reforms that were made state law one year ago. Senate Enrolled Act 449, authored by State Senator Greg Server (R-Evansville) and sponsored in the House by State Representative Charlie Brown (D-Gary), empowers the Health Finance Committee to review and monitor the implementation of the Home Health and Long Term Care Services Reform Act of 2003. The new law, passed unanimously by the General Assembly, requires the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration to be prepared to report on implementation activities to the commission by May 1, 2004.

Last year's reform act -- also known as Senate Enrolled Act 493 -- was designed to make home health, assisted living, adult foster care, personal care services, and adult day care readily available to qualified persons through Indiana's Medicaid program. These alternatives will allow them to leave nursing homes and/or avoid going into them in the first place. The law also raised the income eligibility of persons who qualify for home and community based care through Medicaid to match the income eligibility for nursing home care. Such laws in other states have significantly reduced public spending on Medicaid by reducing the use of more expensive nursing home care.

The 2003 General Assembly designed SEA 493 to be self-funding by using the tax dollars that would otherwise pay for nursing homes to purchase home and community based alternatives. Under SEA 493, a person eligible for Medicaid-funded nursing home services can choose to use a portion of those funds to purchase less expensive home care, assisted living or other community based services.

States like Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, Vermont, Colorado, Utah, Kansas and others all save money by investing in less expensive, more preferred home and community based services according to John Cardwell, Director of The Generations Project. Cardwell drafted the language of SEA 493 for The Generations Project and the Indiana Home Care Task Force, two consumer education and advocacy networks that support long-term care reform.*

Cardwell stated: "SEA 493 represents an enormous opportunity that FSSA has failed to take advantage of. So far that agency has made only token efforts to

implement the 2003 reforms. In fact, they have missed most of the legal deadlines established by the act and are in de facto violation of state law. With the passage of SEA 449, we hope the General Assembly now has the leverage needed to finally spur FSSA into a full and proper implementation of the 2003 statute.”

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The Generations Project is an alliance of AARP Indiana, ARC of Indiana, Alzheimer’s Association, CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions, Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana, Council of Volunteers and Organizations for Hoosiers with Disabilities (COVOH), Indiana Alliance for Retired Americans, Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Indiana Minority Health Coalition, Mental Health Association of Indiana, and United Senior Action of Indiana.

The Generations Project is underwritten in part by The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis, The Indianapolis Foundation, The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, and the Citizens Action Coalition Education Fund. Management support services are provided by CACEF and AARP Indiana.