

FINAL DRAFT - INTRODUCTION - FINAL DRAFT 12/28/04

A significant problem exists within Connecticut's (CT) health care system, one that affects the health, safety, and quality of life of individuals who need nursing home care. Multifaceted, the problem springs from a misalignment of regulations, reimbursement, and policy which impacts nursing homes and hospitals. Specifically, there is a growing concern in the state about the care of nursing home residents who display challenging behaviors, sometimes viewed as "problem," "disruptive," or "unacceptable" behaviors. Much of this concern has been generated by rare, but highly publicized incidents in nursing homes involving residents displaying this kind of behavior. However, other recurring issues within the health care system are raising questions about its approach to caring for persons with challenging behaviors. Without appropriate treatment, challenging behaviors diminish the quality of life of nursing home residents displaying the behaviors as well as other residents, create stressful work environments for nursing home staff, and often result in costly, extended inpatient hospital stays which in turn, creates pressure on the State of CT to intervene.

This document was prepared by the Policy and Regulations Committee (the Committee), one of three committees making up The CT Workgroup on Challenging Behaviors convened by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, to educate policymakers and key stakeholders about the current problems encountered when caring for nursing home residents with challenging behaviors. After an extensive review of the literature and data related to CT, the Committee developed recommendations that speak to a broad-based, collaborative effort that addresses factors influencing the care of nursing home residents with challenging behaviors, including staff education and training, funding, and regulations. The Committee believes that, as the state's population ages and the demand for long-term care services increases, failure to act on this critical issue will result in the escalation of problems related to challenging behaviors.

