



IN SUPPORT OF

S.154/H.253, An Act establishing

guardians as providers of medical care

to support the rights of incapacitated

persons

Dignity Alliance, a statewide, non-profit, all-volunteer coalition advocating for older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers, is pleased to provide our strongest possible support for favorable action by the Committee, and ultimate enactment of classifying guardians as providers of medical care.

Why is this important? It is difficult to attract appropriately trained and qualified individuals to accept this responsibility given the serious responsibility, significant level of work – usually requiring a knowledge of both legal and health care fields, and the limited compensations available. Nevertheless, too many older adults remain stuck in hospitals who might be better served in nursing homes, rest homes, or home care; or isolated in nursing homes, when they could receive quality care in their homes, but are unable to competently decide where and how they should receive care. Very similar issues arise among aging, incarcerated older adults who are confined in prisons or jails and may be deemed eligible for medical parole, but who cannot be paroled without the appointment of a guardian. Consequently, too many older adults received a level of care that is not necessary, but at increasing expense to taxpayers while offering substantially lower levels of dignity for the person. The continued existence of this failure of both care and justice systems is clearly a matter of human rights that is not worthy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!

Dignity Alliance looks forward to working with members of the Committee and Committee Staff to advance this important legislation. If you have any questions, please contact me at dickmoore1943@gmail.com or (617) 413 – 7734. Thank you for the opportunity to share our position relative to S.154/H.253.

Submitted by Richard T. Moore, Chair, Legislative Work Group, Dignity Alliance
Massachusetts.