Appropriations Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5421 / Bill Status / Public Hearing Testimony
Title: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ACCOUNT TO PROVIDE DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO HEALTH CARE FACILITIES.
Vote Date: 4/1/2026
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/12/2026
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
The Appropriations Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to improve access to durable medical equipment (DME) for health care facilities by appropriating monies to a fund managed by the Department of Public Health for DME purchases. This bill aims to assist providers, who have raised concerns about Medicaid reimbursement rates for DME. DME is necessary for safe transit from inpatient to outpatient settings, resulting in increased mobility and healthcare utilization for elderly and disabled persons.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Section 2 is deleted, no funds are appropriated towards the establishment of a million-dollar off-budget fund for the purchase of DME.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Joshua Wojcik, Acting Secretary, Office of Policy and Management (OPM): Acting Secretary Wojcik testified in opposition to the bill because the establishment of an off-budget account does not count toward compliance with the state's constitutional and statutory spending cap. State expenditures should match growth in resident income, to ensure that taxpayers can afford to pay for the state's spending. Furthermore, off-budget accounts are exempt from the annual appropriations process which ensure transparency and oversight of spending. Finally, OPM underscores that healthcare facilities should be responsible for acquiring and utilizing DME as a part of their business models and therefore should not require state subsidies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jay Tulin, Legislative Watchdog, Citizens Coalition for Equal Access: Tulin testified in support of the bill, sharing that their previous spouse passed in 2015 and encountered difficulties accessing the appropriate medical equipment while serving as a primary caregiver. Tulin believes that this legislation will help address some of the urgent needs of persons with disabilities, by helping them acquire appropriate equipment to access medical care.

Ruth Grobe, Secretary, Citizens Coalition for Equal Access: Secretary Grobe testified in support of this bill with amendments, the first being that nursing and hospice facilities be included as eligible facilities for durable medical equipment to ensure parity with Public Act 24-113. Secondly, Grobe requests that training on lift use be added as a permissible expenditure of account funds. Grobe adds that the current hands-on training is inadequate because volunteer transferees do not have physical disabilities and are able to make subtle, unconscious adjustments and by offering modest payments for individuals with physical disabilities to participate to better simulate the process that comes with the acquisition of new lifts.

Antoinette Maraglino, Senior Manager of Clinical Nutrition, Laboratory Services, and Point of Care Testing, Connecticut Children's: Maraglino testified in support of the bill underscoring the importance of durable medical equipment (DME) in safe hospital discharges and continuity of care, especially for pediatric and neonatal patients who depend on specialized equipment for a safe transition from the hospital to home. The bill is a step in the right direction but falls short of offering a comprehensive solution, as Medicaid reimbursement remain an issue as suppliers note that the reimbursement rates fall considerably below market pricing. Subsequently, care teams encounter challenges securing essential supplies necessary for in-home recovery.

Matthew Barrett, President, The Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities/Connecticut Center for Assisted Living; Tracy Wodatch, President, The Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home; The Connecticut Hospital Association; The Connecticut State Medical Society, Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut and Rhode Island: President Barreet, President Wodatch and President Morelli testified in support of the bill's intention to reduce barriers to DME and improve access to care for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The provider associations request that the bill is amended in two instances (1) to include physician practices as eligible grant awardees and (2) elucidate that the locations where DME can be used. They propose healthcare facility, medical office or home health/hospice visit as plausible locations for DME, while underscoring that home health/hospice visits are important mediums to increase care access.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Kyle Zingler **Date: 4/6/2026**