

'Granny Tax' Legislation Targets Dallas Area Seniors

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DALLAS/FT. WORTH - A group of non-profit area health care providers are concerned that legislation in the Texas legislature will tax large numbers of elderly in nursing homes. Known as the Granny Tax, Senate Bill 1130 and House Bill 2766 would generate state revenue by taxing elderly residents of nursing homes. Nursing home residents would each carry a tax bill of over \$4,000 per year. The bill would tax 30,000 nursing home residents across Texas over \$120 million dollars.

"The legislation balances the state budget on the backs of elderly veterans, retired teachers, and other Texans paying for their own nursing home expenses," says Phil Elmore, President & CEO of Christian Care Senior Living Communities serving Ft. Worth, Allen and Mesquite.

C.C. Young, a faith-based retirement community in Dallas, would see residents hit hard by the tax. Russell Crews, President & CEO, sees the legislation as an unacceptable route to generate state revenue. "We are asking the generation that has already sacrificed so much to now pay a significant and unfair tax. We hope legislators make the right choice and find quality of care solutions that are paid for by all Texans, not just those that are sick and aging."

At James L. West Alzheimer's Center in Ft. Worth, 100 residents would be forced to pay the Granny Tax. "This is not the way to fill a hole in the state budget. This tax will put much needed care out of reach for many of our residents and their families", says Susan Farris, President & CEO.

Many of the nation's largest for-profit nursing home chains are backing the tax to improve Medicaid funding. However, a recent report by AARP indicates that Texas nursing home quality is among the worst in the nation. "This tax simply throws money at a problem. It's unfortunate that care for those paying their own way might now be jeopardized," said Farris.

Rather than taxing elderly residents of nursing homes, Dallas area providers support tying state dollars to quality of care. "As Texans, we pride ourselves in minimizing the number of taxes on our citizens and this legislation seems inconsistent with that sentiment," says, Charlie Wilson, Senior Vice President of Buckner Retirement Services. The Texas Legislature is almost mid-way through its

legislative session, as bills continue to wind their way through the legislative maze.

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