
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 7338

AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR ELDERLY NUTRITION, ENSURING EQUITABLE RATES FOR PROVIDERS OF MEALS ON WHEELS AND COLLECTING DATA ON MALNUTRITION.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to annually increase the reimbursement rate for meals-on-wheels providers under the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) by at least the Consumer Price Index's cost of living adjustment. It allows the commissioner to further increase a provider's rate if the provider submits evidence of extraordinary costs related to delivering these meals in rural areas of the state.

The bill also requires the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to consult with elderly nutrition providers, in addition to the five area agencies on aging (AAAs) as current law requires, when reviewing its method for allocating federal Older Americans Act (OAA) funds to AAAs for supportive services and elderly nutrition. It also expands the review to include the (1) method for allocating state funds to the AAAs and (2) formula used to allocate funding for elderly nutrition programs. (The bill does not specify which elderly nutrition providers DORS must consult with.)

Additionally, the bill eliminates a requirement that DORS report on its review to the Appropriations and Human Services committees and instead requires the department to report by July 1, 2021, to the two committees, as well as the Aging Committee, certain information on meals-on-wheels providers. The bill also requires the Department of Health, as part of its quality of care program for licensed health care facilities (e.g., hospitals and nursing homes), to develop recommendations on collecting and analyzing data on patient malnutrition to improve quality of care. By law, the program must

develop a standardized data set to measure health care facilities' clinical performance and require such data to be periodically collected and reported to the department.

Lastly, the bill makes technical changes, including deleting obsolete provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

EVALUATION OF ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAM FUNDING FORMULA

The bill requires DORS to consult with the AAAs and elderly nutrition providers to review the formula it uses to allocate funding to AAAs for elderly nutrition programs. When conducting the review, the department must consider factors including:

1. elderly population data from the 2020 Census and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey for each AAA's planning and service area and
2. any increased costs for meals-on-wheels providers delivering services in sparsely populated rural regions.

DORS REPORT

Under the bill, DORS must report by July 1, 2021, to the Aging, Appropriations, and Human Services committees on:

1. a comparison of each meals-on-wheels provider's reimbursement rates and service delivery costs;
2. each provider's administrative expenses;
3. the number of providers that reduced or eliminated deliveries based on inadequate state reimbursement; and
4. any recommended changes to the department's allocation method or elderly nutrition program funding formula.

BACKGROUND

Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders

CHCPE is a Medicaid waiver and state-funded program that provides a range of home- and community-based services for eligible individuals age 65 and older who are at risk of institutionalization. To be eligible for CHCPE, individuals must be under income and asset limits.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/21/2019)