



To Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, esteemed members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committee,

Testimony in response to **the Human Services Sub-Committee, State Agency Budget Presentation –HR5005**

The **Connecticut Home Care Programs (CHCP) was created** in response to a person's desire to remain independent and in their own home. The Program allows financially and functionally eligible persons access to the care needed to maintain independence and dignity at home. Most individuals, if given a choice, would prefer to remain home. Numerous studies including one by Kaiser Permanente¹ indicate home & community-based waiver programs (CHCP) present significant direct financial savings to Medicaid long-term care (LTC) programs. In addition, as documented in numerous AARP studies, home is where persons prefer and have the best opportunity to thrive. The supports for CHCP, are provided by a network of dedicated providers. Meals on Wheels, adult day, aides, companions and other home care options must be supported with a fair and equitable reimbursement that maintains parity with increases to CT's minimum wage if service stability is to be maintained.

In October 2019, CT Home Care Program Providers received a reimbursement increase of 1% in response to a \$1.00 increase in the minimum wage. For a service reimbursed at \$19.68, this equated to a .20 increase in hourly reimbursement against the \$1.26 increase in Premier Home Health Care Services, Inc. of Ct's labor, and associated tax expense hourly expenses associated with the 1.00 wage increase. It is clear that the variance between reimbursement and actual expense will result in Providers leaving the Medicaid

waiver space. Currently another \$1.00 increase in minimum wage is slated for September 1, 2020.

The clients of the CT Home Care Program represent the oldest, sickest and most frail residents. By clinical definition, the client is "at nursing home level of care". Mandates in the overall health care system, have persons being more rapidly discharged from hospitals and sub-acute rehab, placing the frail and vulnerable back in to a community setting not fully recovered.

As a provider, Premier is committed to training, educating, hiring, and retraining, well-qualified caregiving staff. The inequity in reimbursement places a tremendous strain on providers and limits the ability to allocate, internally, essential funding for skills improvement and education, geared to enhance staffs' knowledge and skills, to keep pace with the new community based care demands as we encounter patients who are sicker, and less stable, upon discharge back into the community.

Without a robust network of quality providers, and caregivers, many clients will have no alternative other than institutional care. The success we have seen in the Money Follows the Person transitions to the community is achieved on the backs of the Providers.

Please advocate and vote for an 8% increase in the Medicaid reimbursement rates for non-skilled home care, adult day care and home delivered meals. Keep nursing home level care in the community. It is both what an individual wants and what the State needs to minimize Medicaid expenditures.

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Premier Home Health Care Services, Inc. of CT, a SWCAA provider servicing Fairfield County

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