



TESTIMONY

Submitted by Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO
The Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home

Appropriations Committee – Human Services Budget
Public Hearing

February 19, 2020

Regarding the Governor's Budget for Human Services

Good afternoon/evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO of the CT Association for Healthcare at Home. Our Association is the united voice for Connecticut's licensed (medical) home health and hospice agencies who employ a substantial workforce of nurses, therapists, social workers and home health aides providing cost-effective, person-centered home healthcare for Connecticut residents in the setting they prefer most – their own homes.

Home-based healthcare offers a tangible return on investment and is a SAVINGS vehicle for the State. According to the CT Dept. of Social Services (DSS) data, the CT Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) saved \$398-Million last year alone by keeping Medicaid clients in their homes and out more costly institutional settings. This continues a 13-year State Budget savings trend now totaling \$2.1 Billion (see attached flyer).

Home health care agencies are reimbursed by insurances (Medicaid, Medicare and commercial) all of which only offer slim or negative margins; therefore, the agencies cannot increase their prices without rate increases.

Our Medicaid rates have remained flat for the last 13 years while DSS has implemented multiple unfunded mandates (including EVV, removal of add-ons, med admin rate cuts and a minimum wage mandate to \$15/hr by 2023)...as a result, we are seeing several agencies decreasing or discontinuing the number of Medicaid clients they can serve along with a significant increase in agencies who are closing their doors or merging with



others. In addition, workforce recruitment and retention has become a near impossible challenge.

In addition, there is no Medicaid coverage for home health Social Work services, a specialty that is needed now more than ever due to the high need for addressing social determinants of health to ensure successful, person-centered care.

The time is now. We urge the Appropriations Committee to put forth a budget that includes substantial Medicaid rate increases for all Home and Community-based Services, but most especially for Home Health.

This evening, you will hear from several of our providers advocating for adequate Medicaid rates. These needed increases span several areas of services:

- Overall Medicaid rates for licensed home health (nursing, therapy, and home health aides inclusive of waiver services and care of the sick medical population);
- Medicaid rates for a specific specialty of home health known as Continuous Skilled Nursing (extended nursing hours in the home for medically fragile, chronically ill patients both children and adults) who need nearly 24/7 nursing care; and
- Medicaid rates for non-medical home care services (PCAs, Homemaker-Companions, Live-ins).

With my written testimony, I have submitted several fact sheets supporting the flat Medicaid rates over time, the unfunded mandates and the cost savings our industry provides the state of CT.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Tracy Wodatch

203-774-4940

wodatch@cthealthcareathome.org