



TESTIMONY

Submitted by Susan F. Adams, Vice President
Of Alliance Integration for Masonicare

Appropriation Committee – Human Services Budget
Public Hearing

February 19, 2020

Regarding the Governor's Budget for Human Services

My name is Susan Adams, Vice President for Alliance Integration for Masonicare. Masonicare is a full continuum of care specializing in Senior Services. One of our service lines is Home Health and Hospice. On any given day we touch the lives of over 1500 patients throughout Connecticut.

Patients rely on home-based healthcare and our caregivers in order to have the ability to stay safely in their own homes. We have some patients we have cared for, for many years. We have other patients who stay with us just long enough to be independent in their own care. We keep people out of the hospital or from having to go back to a hospital. I don't know of anyone who would ever voluntarily ask to be hospitalized. We want only the highest quality of caregivers for those patients. There is a tremendous amount of competition for the right caregivers. Our workforce is shrinking. We need to have the opportunity not only to attract talent but also to retain them. We need to work on elevating the respect for this health segment and being able to reimburse these invaluable staff at a rate equal to the task they take on, that of caring for human beings.

Our staff are like the postal service, they actually go out into patient's homes. They have to be invited in and they are guests in those patient's homes. They see patients in every kind of weather. They travel miles in between patients. Patients will actually tell them not to come for fear of their safety and concern about their ability to continue to provide services for them.

However, fewer skilled care-givers equals fewer skilled caregiving visits.

In order to continue to provide these services we can no longer survive increased costly regulatory burdens and a flat reimbursement rate for the last 13 years. If you do the math you would recognize that there are more people aging in place over the age of 85. There are fewer people under the age of 15 which means there are fewer potential caregivers to draw from.

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Access to care at home is becoming more and more difficult to guarantee. Simply stated, without the skilled caregivers we cannot accept more patients.

Now add that there are many more people wanting to receive care in their own homes (wherever that may be). Add that hospitals and our government also want patients in their own homes for skilled services (Nursing, Therapy and Social Work). It is proven that patients attain their highest level of functioning in their own homes. Their homes are also the place where they can receive skilled services at the lowest cost.

So why is it that we cannot compete for enough of the highest quality caregivers? We are reimbursed at **57%** of our costs. We are forced to limit the number of Medicaid patients we can accept. Some agencies cannot accept Medicaid patients at all. We have no choice!

We must remain financially viable in order to provide services to as many patients as possible. We have worked year over year, for the past 13 years, to decrease our costs and we simply cannot continue to reduce costs and still be quality providers. I don't want less than the best for my Mother or yours.

We need your help in not only recognizing the expanding need but also by doing something about it. Our patients need your help. We have demonstrated our willingness to work together to find ways to eradicate work flows that are not efficient. We seek out any opportunity we can find to educate about Healthcare and particularly Home Healthcare. We offer the opportunity to take any one of you out to actually see a home visit, where the magic happens. We stand ready to work together to find better solutions.

We need that increased financial reimbursement to start yesterday.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or thoughts. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully submitted,

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