



## TESTIMONY

Submitted by Mariette McCourt RN, MSN  
Health Policy and Quality Liaison with  
All About You Collaborative Health Care Services, LLC

Appropriation Committee – Human Services Budget  
Public Hearing  
March 3, 2021

### Regarding the Governor's Budget for Human Services

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Kushner, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Appropriations Human Services Sub-Committee.

My name is Mariette McCourt, health policy liaison with a moderate sized Home Care Agency. **All About You Collaborative Health Care Services, LLC** has offices in Torrington, Naugatuck and East Haven. The Agency provides services to young and older adults living in these areas with acute as well as chronic medical and/or behavioral health conditions. We participate in private insurance, Medicare Advantage plans, Medicare as well as Medicaid which currently insures approximately 53% of our clients.

We appreciate this opportunity to express our thanks for the collaborative State Agency support during this pandemic as well as address ongoing concerns related to 1. CT Medicaid funding for Home Care services 2. MSW service reimbursement and 3. continuation of post-pandemic reimbursement for skilled nursing visits (SNV) using various acceptable telehealth interventions.

1. The CT Association for HealthCare at Home has outlined concern about stagnate Medicaid rates for home care services. Continuing to inadequately fund these services will over time corrode the available services to Medicaid clients in our communities. This does seem to be occurring over the past several years in CT. Some agencies have focused more on privately insured and Medicare clients and less on accepting Medicaid insured clients to remain financially solvent. While our Agency continues to accept Medicaid clients, remaining financially sound at current reimbursement rates is challenging. In addition to competitive visit pay rates, agencies need to account for overhead costs such as liability insurance, workers compensation and employee benefits to name a few. The last time the state increased the nursing and therapy visit rates was 1/1/15 which was by 1%.



We are requesting this Committee to implement, at minimum, an immediate 3% rate increase for SNV for non-waiver home care programs and request this Committee align home health rates with the waiver rates going forward, as recommended by the CT Association for Healthcare at Home. In addition, reimbursement rates for therapy should also be considered for rate adjustment. In 2020, DSS increased the home health rate (HHA) \$.60/hour from \$25.36 to \$25.96 which was a 2.3% increase related to last year's minimum wage increase. The CT minimum wage is going to increase again on 8/1/21 from \$12/hour to \$13/hour which is over an 8% increase. Consideration should be given for a rate increase in anticipation of this wage increase.

2. Master's Prepared Social Workers (MSW) are an integral part of the home care team along with Physical (PT), Occupational (OT) and Speech Therapy (ST) yet MSW visits are not Medicaid reimbursable, rather paid by the Agency. Many of our patients with complex needs and their families would benefit from brief MSW services for assessment of and referral to community-based services as well as long term care planning. We request this Committee include funding for this level of service in Home Care funding.
3. We would also like to express our support of recent testimony regarding the continuance of reimbursement for telehealth options for home health post public health emergency. The provision of telehealth between skilled visits promotes disease management, psychosocial support, care management and positive health outcomes for individuals in the community.

Home Care services are part of the continuum of care in our communities. Financial and policy support for home care is critical to enabling equity in health care and creating opportunities for innovations to better provide services and lower health costs. Thank you for listening and considering these requests.