

September 9, 2015

Call to Action on Resolving the State Budget Impasse

The current state budget impasse is hurting access to care for NH's most vulnerable citizens who need home care. We're asking home care employees, trustees, patients and their families to contact your state legislators before September 16th and ask them to help!

The Problem

The **NH Medicaid Choices for Independence** (CFI) program helps low-income seniors and other adults who qualify for nursing home care. With regular assistance from home care agencies, CFI individuals can remain in their homes. It's where they want to be, and it costs the State less than a nursing home or hospital.

Unfortunately, CFI payments to home care agencies are extremely low and agencies can no longer cover CFI losses with declining income from Medicare. As a result, many home care agencies have been forced to discontinue or limit CFI services.

The NH Legislature passed a State Budget in June that includes important rate improvements for home care agencies that participate in the CFI program. The rate relief is intended to stabilize the CFI provider network. It includes:

- a 5% rate increase for all CFI home health services (RN, HHA, PCSP and homemaker) provided from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017.
- a one-time retroactive, supplemental payment of \$1.8 million to home care agencies that provided RN, HHA, and homemaker services, based on their billings from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

Governor Hassan's veto of the budget means that NH state government is operating under a "Continuing Resolution." The Governor's veto was mostly about business taxes. So far, the Governor and Legislators have not worked out their differences. In the meantime, CFI rate relief is on hold. If the CFI rate relief is not implemented soon, many vulnerable seniors and fragile adults may lose the support they depend on because home care agencies cannot afford to provide CFI services. It has already happened in several communities.

The Legislature will meet on September 16th to vote on all vetoed bills, including the State Budget. We need one of the following:

- A new compromise budget that includes the 5% rate increase and supplemental payment which supports access to home health services, OR
- An override of the Governor's veto, which will enact the budget passed by the Legislature in June.

You Can Help!

It's important that State Legislators know that the budget impasse is hurting access to care for people in our communities who depend on CFI home care services. **Please contact your town's NH State Representative and your area's NH State Senator before September 16th.**

Make the call! Here are the key messages:

- The budget impasse is hurting NH's vulnerable seniors and adults who need help to stay out of nursing homes and remain independent. People in the NH Medicaid Choices for Independence (CFI) program may soon lose access to important home care services.
- Home care agencies can no longer afford to offer services at NH's low CFI rates. The budget passed by the Legislature includes critical rate relief that will enable home care agencies to continue to care for the neediest citizens in our community.
- **Legislators and the Governor should agree on a compromise budget soon** – one that supports access to home care services for our most vulnerable citizens.
- **If an agreement isn't reached by the time the Legislature meets on September 16, please help our frail seniors stay in their homes by voting to override the Governor's veto.**

How to Contact Your Legislators

There are 24 NH State Senators. Many of them represent large geographic districts. This [NH State Senate List](#) provides all the contact info, including the towns in their District. You can call State Senators at either their home or State House office.

There are 400 NH State Representatives. Every town has at least one state rep. You can find your state rep in this [NH State Reps List](#), which is sorted by party (Democrats on pages 1-5, Republicans on pages 6-13) and by town. Or you can use this [NH State Rep Excel Document](#), which is sorted by town.

You can also go to [Who's My Legislator](#) for more details (eg. wards within large cities.)

Phone calls are the best way to reach legislators. You can call during the day, early evenings and on weekends. Legislators expect calls from constituents. It's OK to leave a brief voice mail message about your concerns. Email is also an option if there are time constraints or to follow-up, but it is less effective.

A few tips:

- Be polite.
- Tell them your name, where you live or work and why you are concerned about access to home care.
- Include the key messages from above.
- Thank them for listening to your concerns.

Your advocacy is essential to letting Legislators know about this important issue. Please contact legislators as soon as possible prior to September 16th!