

GRANITE STATE HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE ASSOCIATION

Call to Action on State Budget Funding for Home Care Services

*The NH Senate Finance Committee has begun work on the State Budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. One area of the budget that needs more funding is the Choices for Independence program. **Home care leaders, trustees, staff, patients and their families should contact key state senators before May 30th and ask them to help.***

The Problem

The NH Medicaid Choices for Independence Program (CFI) helps low income 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 hospital or nursing home care.

Unfortunately, CFI payments to home care agencies are extremely low. Many agencies have been forced to discontinue or limit CFI services. Low reimbursement means that agencies cannot offer competitive wages, recruit and retain workers, and meet the needs of our clients. Many CFI clients go without their full array of services, and those who are newly eligible for CFI wait months to obtain any care.

The Opportunity

House Bill 1 (the budget) passed by the House includes some additional funding for CFI, but not as much as the Governor originally proposed. The NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is planning a 2.5% rate increase for CFI providers – which is appreciated, but not enough to make a meaningful difference in rates that have been underfunded for years. Another bill, Senate Bill 308, would increase rates for *all* Medicaid providers by 5% in 2020 and 7% in 2021.

Over the next few weeks, the Senate Finance Committee will review the House budget in detail and recommend changes. They will also consider how to fold SB 308 into the budget. This is an opportunity to add more state funds to the CFI program, direct DHHS to increase CFI provider rates to better reflect our present economy and increase rates for all Medicaid providers. ***Senators need to hear from constituents about how important the CFI program is to medically fragile people in New Hampshire.***

What You Can Do

If you live or work in any of the towns represented by the following State Senators, call, write or email them. If your Senator is not on this list, contact Senator Lou D'Allesandro, the Committee Chair, or Sen. Dan Feltes, Vice Chair.

Senate Finance Committee Members

Senator Lou D'Allesandro (Manchester & Goffstown)

Chairman

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Senator Dan Feltes (Concord, Hopkinton, Henniker, Warner)

Vice Chairman/Senate Majority Leader

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Senator Cindy Rosenwald (Nashua)

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Senator Jay Kahn (Alstead, Chesterfield, Gilsum, Harrisville, Hinsdale, Keene, Marlborough, Nelson, Roxbury, Sullivan, Surry, Swanzey, Walpole, Westmoreland, Winchester)

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Senator John Reagan (Allenstown, Chichester, Deerfield, Epsom, Loudon, Northwood, Nottingham, Pembroke, Pittsfield, Raymond, Strafford)

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Senator Bob Giuda (Alexandria, Ashland, Bridgewater, Bristol, Campton, Center Harbor, Danbury, Dorchester, Ellsworth, Grafton, Groton, Haverhill, Hebron, Hill, Holderness, Meredith, New Hampton, Orange, Orford, Piermont, Plymouth, Rumney, Sanbornton, Tilton, Warren, Wentworth, Wilmot)

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Tips for Contacting State Senators

Phone calls are the best. It is unlikely that you will speak to Senators directly, so leave a message. A written letter is second best because it's more personal. Use your own words and give an example of how lack of funding impacts your agency and clients, (e.g. staffing, turnover, having to decline new referrals, reduction in services to clients, waitlists.) Emails are OK, but not as effective because legislators get so many of them.

Provide your name, the town you live or work in, what you do and why you're calling. For example, *"I'm a home care nurse from Manchester who cares for people in your district, and I'm really concerned about the Choices for Independence program."* Remember, any views you express are your own unless your agency has authorized you to speak on its behalf.

Talking Points

- **The CFI program needs more funding because people aren't getting the care they need.**
- **Please add more general funds to the CFI program in HB 1 and direct DHHS to increase rates. This will help agencies invest in workforce and stabilize the CFI program.**
- **Please fully fund SB 308 to raise rates for all Medicaid providers.**
- **NH's economy is strong and now is the time to fix CFI.**

Other Things You Can Do

- Write an op-ed or short letter to the editor of your local paper to express your concerns.
- Here are some examples that have already appeared in news outlets around the state:
 - [The Domino Effect of Bad Public Policy: A Silent Crisis for Seniors and the Infirm](#)
 - [Jeff Dickinson: Resolve NH's Silent Crisis](#)
 - [More funding for In-Home Care](#)
- Share op-eds on your agency's website, Facebook, Twitter and other social media.
- Ascentria Care Alliance has created videos of clients talking about how important CFI is to them. The clients have given Ascentria permission to share them broadly on YouTube. The videos are not branded. Consider sharing them through social media.
 - Irene: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVeTg_ngEmg
 - Susan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGRzZv3SUMA>
 - Joyce: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtOMIUHRcng>
 - David: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8i0INNj1nU>

Everyone's Voices Matter!

Our State Senators need to hear from everyone involved in home care – agency leaders, trustees, professional caregivers, family caregivers and clients. Grassroots advocacy works! Please contact these Senators in the next two weeks and let them know how important the Choices for Independence program is for people who want to stay at home. **The more people speak out, the more we will be heard!**

Questions? [Contact Gina Balkus](#). 603-225-5597