



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
SENATE REPUBLICAN OFFICES

December 13, 2021

Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH
Commissioner, Department of Social Services
55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Commissioner Gifford:

We are writing to share our concerns and call for immediate action to address an alarming issue facing Connecticut's seniors and disabled individuals and the workers who serve them in home care settings.

In June, the state legislature approved a 1.7% across-the-board increase to the state's Medicaid reimbursement rate for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) set to take effect July 1, 2021. However, this rate increase still has not been implemented by the Department of Social Services.

This rate increase is intended to support the caregivers who provide home supports to seniors and disabled individuals, including visiting nurses, home delivered meals, and other assistance that enables the most vulnerable to continue living in their homes and avoid more expensive institutionalized care settings. The rate increase would help support homemakers and companions who provide vital assistance yet remain some of the lowest paid workers who still struggle to make ends meet. This rate increase was to be funded by state General Fund dollars and was approved by the legislature to be effective July 1, 2021.

Over five months have passed since this rate increase was scheduled to take effect. The delay in the rate increase puts enormous financial pressure on small providers who offer care services through Medicaid, their workers, and the vulnerable populations they serve. Providers are already facing budgetary challenges as they work to address increasing food and fuel expenses, the effects of minimum wage increases, and the pandemic. The delay in the Medicaid reimbursement rate increase adds another financial strain amongst many that is making it increasingly difficult for providers to continue offering services to Connecticut's most vulnerable residents in the Medicaid waiver programs.

We understand that rate increases will eventually be applied retroactively. But the problem is care providers are struggling to stay afloat today. We are very concerned that growing financial pressures will force small providers to pull out of the state's home care program because they can no longer afford to provide care within Medicaid. Time is of the essence to provide relief and promised funding to support our care providers, home care workers, and the seniors and disabled individuals they serve.

We ask that the administration turn its full attention to swiftly advance these rate increases and help Connecticut's most vulnerable individuals and the workers who care for them every day.

Sincerely,



Senator Kevin C. Kelly
Senate Republican Leader



Senator Eric Berthel
Ranking Member Human Services Committee

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