



# New England Home Care

*Taking Advanced Care Home*

**Written Testimony Kimberly Nystrom, President**

**New England Home Care**

**Before the Appropriations Committee**

**Public Hearing Regarding the CT Department of Social Services (DSS) Budget**

**February 14, 2014**

Dear Senator Bye and Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, I am Kimberly Nystrom, President of New England Home Care.

We fully support the testimony of Deborah Hoyt, President and CEO of the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home. The collective concern of the association and its members is the on-going need to fund and invest in the home health care industry.

**Support An Increase in Home Health Agency Medicaid Reimbursement to:**

- **Ensure a Viable and Adequate CT Home Care Provider Network**
- **Avoid Disruption to Consumer Access to Home Care**
- **Enable DSS to Continue to Reap Cost Savings in the Medicaid Program, as Home-based Care is the Most Cost-effective Care Setting.**

New England Home Care is a long time member of the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home. We are a licensed and certified provider of home care, servicing over 100 towns in the provision of medical, pediatric and psychiatric home based skilled services.

As I am sitting in my office during the second snow storm in a week, our nurses, therapists, and home health aides are travelling in high stress conditions servicing the most vulnerable individuals that would otherwise be in higher costs settings.

I would like to highlight here the quality and value of behavioral health home care nurses.

**Early Intervention = Reduction in Emergency Use and Avoidable Hospitalizations = High Quality and Low Cost**

- **Psychiatric nurses are trained to asses and intervene at very early stages. We see home environmental factors of threats and violence where individuals are at high risk for negative consequences.**



**Cromwell Branch**  
 136 Berlin Road  
 Cromwell, CT 06416  
 tel 860.632.4000  
 fax 860.613.3304

**New Haven Branch**  
 370 James Street  
 New Haven, CT 06513  
 tel 203.874.6667  
 fax 203.882.7170

**Windsor Branch**  
 80 Lamberton Road  
 Windsor, CT 06095  
 tel 860.683.4603  
 fax 860.683.4612

**Shelton Branch**  
 2 Trap Falls Road  
 Shelton, CT 06484  
 tel 203.925.5929  
 fax 203.225.0385

**Waterbury Branch**  
 525 Wolcott Street  
 Waterbury, CT 06705  
 tel 203.573.8232  
 fax 203.596.7902

Accredited/Certified by  
The Joint Commission

Connecticut Licensed  
Medicare/Medicaid Certified

- As home based, early intervention specialists, we liaison with physicians, treaters and local mental health authorities to expedite appropriate interventions to avoid costly institutional care.

**Skilled Assessment = Diversion from Harmful and Violent Behavior towards self and others = Quality of Life and Productive Citizens**

- A skilled mental health and clinical assessment includes monitoring complex medication regimes, complicating medical conditions and risk factors which can frequently go unnoticed by those that suffer from mental illness.
- Included in these routine assessments is the presence of hallucinations, delusional thinking and the existence of suicidal and homicidal thoughts which require ongoing skilled management.

**Valued Community Based Partner = Mobilized and Skilled Workforce**

- We in the industry are here to collaborate and support a meaningful way to keep those with potentially unstable clinical needs safely in the community.
- Investment in the home care industry will allow ongoing innovation and training of a very large work force and focus on person centered care models such as the health home models and neighborhoods developing throughout the State.

**CONCLUSION: Support an Increase in Home Health Agency Medicaid Reimbursement**

Medicaid rates to home care providers has remained flat since 2005, no increases or cost of living adjustments in these 9 years while regulatory burdens escalate each year.

Over the last two sessions, the home care industry worked with state officials and legislative champions to model a system which incorporates unlicensed caregivers to provide medication administration in the home environment. This new model saves the State money long term in supporting rebalancing from institutional care. For years, the home care industry has engaged in a spirit of collaboration with a solution oriented approach. To continue on this path of innovation in creating high quality cost effective models, it is essential to allocate financial resources to the home health care system through an increase in Medicaid rates or other investment models.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kimberly Nystrom, RN, JD  
President, New England Home Care