LeadingAge Connecticut

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

Presented by Mag Morelli, President of LeadingAge Connecticut

February 14, 2014

Regarding the Needed Investment in the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders

HB 5030, An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the President of LeadingAge Connecticut, a statewide association of non-profit and mission-driven providers of high quality aging services across the full continuum. I am here tonight to urge the state to increase the reimbursement rates within the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders and I am joined by representatives of the other statewide associations that represent the home and community based providers that deliver the services and supports to Connecticut's Home Care Program clients.

Introduction of representatives of the Connecticut Assisted Living Association, Connecticut Community Care, Inc., Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging, Connecticut Association of Health Care at Home, Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers, and the Connecticut Association of Adult Day Centers.

We are here tonight because we support the state's rebalancing effort and we want to see it succeed. However, a balanced system of long term services and supports cannot be achieved without a strong network of quality home and community based providers of aging services and we do not believe that the state has invested the time or resources necessary to build that network. To do so requires an investment in the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE)

The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders is the heart and soul of our state's rebalancing plan when it comes to aging services. It is this program that helps eligible clients over the age of 65 continue to live at home instead of going to a nursing home. It is the delivery of the services provided within the Home Care Program for Elders, packaged in an individualize care plan for each client, that allows an elderly person to remain at home or to return to home through the Money Follows the Person Program.

That is why it is vital that we invest in this program and in the providers who deliver the services.

To be eligible, applicants must be 65 years of age or older, be at risk of nursing home placement and meet the program's stringent financial eligibility criteria. To be at risk of nursing home placement means that the applicant needs assistance with critical needs such as bathing, dressing, eating, taking medications, and toileting.

CHCPE Services may include:

- -Care Management Services
- -Companion Services
- -Homemaker Services
- -Personal Care Attendant Services
- -Adult Family Living (new service)
- -Emergency Response Systems
- -Adult Day Health Services
- -Home Delivered Meals
- -Assisted Living Services
- -Chore Assistance
- -Conflict Free Care Management

Most providers in the CHCPE have not received a rate increase in years. 2005 for assisted living service providers, 2007 for home delivered meals, and 2011 for adult day services. We propose that the State move quickly to strengthen this program by fostering the development of an expanded and quality network of home and community based providers so as to ensure a successful rebalancing effort.

We would propose that the state implement an immediate 2% increase in the provider rates, require the development of a plan for the next biennial budget to bring the rates up to adequate levels based on the cost of providing the care, and require an annual indexing of the rates thereafter. **These positive changes should also apply to the Home Care Program for the Disabled** which should be supported and expanded as proposed by the Governor.

In closing, we come together to urge the state to initiate a plan to increase and sustain reimbursement rates within the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders so as to develop and support a network of quality aging services providers in the community. Without adequate reimbursement rates, new quality providers will not enter the home and community based services market, long standing quality providers will be forced to leave the market, and the state will not achieve a balanced system of long term care, services and supports.

Thank you and we would be happy to answer any questions.

Mag Morelli, President

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