

Dear Appropriation Committee members,

The biennial budget proposed by Governor Dannel P. Malloy has been described as “equitably spreading the pain while keeping a pledge not to raise taxes.” Unfortunately, the pain will be felt by thousands of Connecticut’s most frail, infirm and elderly citizens if this budget is passed in its present form. Hartford HealthCare at Home cares for Connecticut’s most vulnerable citizens across the state. They depend upon our staff to bring them nursing care, rehabilitation services, medical social work and personal care. By reducing Medicaid funding to our agency and other home care agencies across the state, this proposed budget will cause the unwanted reality of making it harder for these citizens to get the care they need in the place where they want to remain, their home. The budget, as proposed, will see agencies unable to care for Medicaid clients. As a non-profit organization with a long history of giving back to the community by caring for people regardless of their ability to pay, it will make it more difficult to support this goal especially in light of the federal reimbursement cutbacks that are enacted each year.

It is not only our citizens who rely on Medicaid that will be affected. Citizens who participate and receive state-funded home care services through Connecticut’s access programs will see their co-pays more than double. Most of these frail elderly are living on a limited budget and will be unable to afford the increases which this budget supports. The result – many of these seniors will lose the only thing that is keeping them out of a nursing home – their nurses and aides. By removing these safe guards, the state will see an increase in both emergency room visits and nursing home admissions.

It is a known fact that our population is aging, according to the CT Association for Healthcare at Home, “CT projects an increase in 2,985 individuals over age 65 needing home and community based services to age in place in their homes.” When taking this into account, it is easy to see that keeping people home is the most cost effective solution to the aging of Connecticut. Home and community based services saved the state of Connecticut \$533.5 million under the Medicaid program between 2009 and 2013.

We cannot allow the state of Connecticut to turn its back on those citizens who need compassionate, quality and expert care in their twilight years. Please remember these people as you work to enact a budget that will fairly and responsibly enable our fellow citizens to live in their homes with the dignity that they deserve. Protect our citizens – the responsibility now rests with you.

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