

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today as a pediatric Physical Therapist who provides services to disabled children and their families through 3 Birth To Three Programs and as an out-patient pediatric PT at L&M Hospital Out-Pt Rehab Services in Waterford. I live in Waterford CT and am the parent of a special needs young adult.

I am concerned about the changes in Medicaid reimbursement for Birth to Three services. I am a front line worker, but I believe the administrators who fear that a change in the Lead Agency and a change in billing practices for Medicaid is too much. Medicaid billing will place enormous burdens on the provider community. This will impact on the quality and reliability of the valuable services that Birth to Three provides to the vulnerable children of CT.

I am also concerned that changes in Medicaid payments/reimbursements, for durable medical equipment such as standers, strollers, pediatric beds, feeding seats and walkers, are causing DME providers to be unable to come to clinic appointments for equipment demonstrations, to be unable to make home visits to repair equipment and even to be unable to order certain types of equipment at all.

I think of the families for whom I have procured equipment....the child who needed an enclosed bed because she is autistic and would wake in the night, leave her bed, knock down the gate at her doorway and move about the house or the child who could not sit or move on his own and whose grandmother caretakers were carrying him in their arms from their houses into the car and out to appointments because he didn't sit well enough for a standard stroller. Then there is the autistic boy whose gait trainer is on order. He will take steps if supported, but cannot stand alone and the gait trainer will allow him to stand and practice walking when his mother can't have her hands on him. He will be able to safely stand in the kitchen while she prepares his food. How will these changes affect the equipment on order for him. He just graduated from Birth to Three.

Birth to Three and the durable medical equipment that is ordered for disabled children through Medicaid are two services that are lifelines for the families of our youngest disabled citizens. It is hard to be the parent of a child with special needs. To worry over their development, to not understand their problem, to struggle with simple day to day tasks that parents of typical children do not struggle with. Birth to Three staff provide

support, tools and education to help the families and their children. Equipment enables children and families to do simple, ordinary tasks that most of us take for granted. Please do not dismantle the safety net of services and limit access to this support for the poorest of our disabled citizens.

I ask you to find an alternative for Medicaid billing that will ensure the continuity of excellent services and supports for Connecticut's children and families. And I also ask that adequate funding and reimbursement for adaptive equipment for these children and their families be restored to previous levels. Please contact me with any questions at this email or elandesberg@lmhosp.org.

Respectfully,

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Elyse Landesberg, PT
Birth to Three Contractor
for
LEARN, Creative Interventions and Kidsteps
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Out-Patient Rehab Services at Waterford, Lawrence and Memorial Hospital