

## Investment in Home and Community Based Services To Align With Nursing Facility Care

TO: House Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee  
FR: LeadingAge Ohio  
Ohio Assisted Living Association  
Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
Ohio Council on Home Care and Hospice  
Ohio Health Care Association

DATE: March 1, 2021

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The above organizations testified as a panel before you on February 24, 2021 on HB 110. We are joining together to ask Ohio lawmakers to take action in the state budget to bring parity to the level of investment for older Ohioans and Ohioans with disabilities who are served in their homes and communities.

Home and community-based Medicaid waiver programs are cost-effective options for older Ohioans and Ohioans with disabilities to live healthy, engaged, secure lives in their homes and communities. It is where most people want to be. However, our members are experiencing significant challenges in finding personal care aides to provide services in these programs. Providers are dropping out as a result and they are not easily replaced. They face low rates, staffing shortages and economic forces that combine to make the business model unsustainable for them to continue.

Ohio's system is set up for a continuum of care, with the provision of cost effective services at home to assisted living waiver options to full skilled nursing care. However, without the ability to provide personal care services in the community settings because of a lack of providers, eligible participants are turned away or disenrolled, or to immediately go to the full skilled nursing care when that is not necessarily what they need or want.

We support the following:

- 5% increase in each year of the biennium for community nursing and aide services in the ODM and ODA-administered waivers, including assisted living, and state plan services,<sup>1</sup> to address the historic underfunding of HCBS and to assist in recovery from the damage caused by COVID-19. Director Corcoran testified to the full committee that the Administration's proposal allocated \$43.8 million in state share for the 4% rate increase. This proposal would add \$42.8 million state share to this sum to help ensure older Ohioans and people with disabilities can receive the services they need in the settings of their choice.
- Annual review of provider rates and workforce shortage to assure that payments are consistent with efficiency, economy, and quality of care and are sufficient to enlist enough providers so that care and services are available to those who are eligible for community nursing and aide services in the ODM and ODA administered waivers, assisted living, and state plan services.

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<sup>1</sup> The specific services include: Private duty nursing, state plan nursing, home health aide, personal care for MyCare, PASSPORT, and Ohio Home Care; home care attendant for MyCare and Ohio Home Care; homemaker services for PASSPORT; assisted living in MyCare; assisted living waiver (ODA); waiver nursing for PASSPORT, Ohio Home Care, MyCare and Individual options waivers. We also support increases in waiver meals for MyCare, Ohio Home Care and PASSPORT.