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May 15, 2024

Hon. Marvin Abney, Chairman
Committee on Finance
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for House Bill 7298 "Medicaid Home Care Rate Increases"

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to bring your attention to a critical issue impacting your homebound constituents dependent on home care services. Rhode Island's Medicaid Program severely underfunds home care services and supports. Its rates are set by the General Assembly through the annual budget process. OHIC, the Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner, released a report on September 1, 2023, stating that Rhode Island's home care providers are on average 41.9% to 74.5% underfunded compared to its New England state counterparts. This report did not include the 18.9% underfunding for skilled nursing and therapeutic services provided in the home for children and adults with exceptional disabilities, as well as elders requiring nursing services following an injury, major surgery, chronic debilitating illness or care toward end-of-life.

I am asking you to support including House Bill 7298, sponsored by Representative Patricia Serpa, in the SFY25 budget to fully-fund home care services for our most vulnerable, homebound Rhode Islanders. We are concerned about your constituents that are sitting on wait lists for months hoping to receive the care necessary to remain safe at home. Including the language in this bill in the SFY25 budget will raise wages to stabilize and grow the home care workforce necessary to provide care at home for Rhode Islanders in need.

By supporting House Bill 7298, you will be investing in home healthcare services now! The lives of medically fragile individuals and their families would not only significantly improve, but the investment would also save the state money in the long term. An investment in home health care means reducing healthcare costs and improving the overall health of your constituents.

Thank you for supporting home care, our patients and clients that receive quality, safe care to remain at home, and our employees that ensure healthcare services are performed efficiently and cost-effectively. If you have any questions, please contact me at 401-330-2525 or pallen@bayada.com.

Sincerely,

Paula Allen