



**Rhode Island Partnership  
for Home Care**

*Advancing quality healthcare at home*

May 15, 2024

**VIA EMAIL:** [housefinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:housefinance@rilegislature.gov)

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

**Re: Support for House Bill 7298 “An Act Relating to Human Services - Medical Assistance - Long-Term Care Service and Finance Reform”**

Dear Chair Abney,

On behalf of Medicaid-contracted home care providers, along with their staff, patients, clients and family caregivers, I am requesting that your committee include House Bill 7298, sponsored by Representative Patricia Serpa, within your SFY25 budget proposal to fully-fund home care services for our most vulnerable, homebound Rhode Islanders. Collectively, 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 within this bill in the SFY25 budget will raise wages to stabilize and grow the home care workforce necessary to meet the needs of current Medicaid beneficiaries.

Rhode Island needs to reform its financing of Medicaid home and community-based services and supports. Home care has the potential to provide taxpayers with the greatest savings within the long-term care system, but these providers are grossly underfunded. Its rates are set by the General Assembly through the annual budget process. The Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) released its 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 depending on the type of healthcare service delivered to the beneficiary. **This report did not include the 18.9% underfunding for home-based skilled nursing and therapeutic services** provided 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.

This important legislation addresses what is missing in the Governor’s current budget proposal for the “Home and Community Care Program”. This bill, along with its companion, Senate Bill 2309, sponsored by Senator Mark McKenney, provides base rate adjustments per the OHIC report to compete in the labor market, support the rising costs for medical equipment and supplies, cover federal and state mandates for direct care staff mileage reimbursement and travel time, as well as ongoing staff training and increases in federal and state payroll taxes, professional liability insurance, workers’ compensation insurance and other expenses toward the total cost to deliver care at home. The bill also reduces the lengthy Medicaid beneficiary wait lists for urgent services at home and provides long-term cost savings to taxpayers in future state budgets.

Thank you for considering your support for this important cost-saving and quality of life enhancing Medicaid rate reform bill and amending the proposed state budget accordingly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicholas A. Oliver". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "N".

Nicholas Oliver, MPA, CAE  
Executive Director

cc: Members, House Committee on Finance