

February 28, 2024

House Committee on Finance
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HB 7225, An Act Making Appropriations for the Support of the State Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025, Article 9 section(c) Provider Reimbursement Rates. Support with Amendments.

Dear Chairman Abney and Committee Members,

My name is Jacob Auslander and I am the Director of Operations at Maxim Healthcare Services, Inc at our Providence location (“Maxim”). Maxim is a national provider of home health care services and we provide over 124,000 hours of service per year throughout Rhode Island employing approximately 105 caregivers and nurses, primarily offering private duty nursing (PDN) services. Private duty nursing is continuous skilled nursing care provided in the home for medically-complex and vulnerable pediatric and adult patient populations under Medicaid, many of whom require assistive technology such as ventilators and tracheostomies to sustain life.

Many Rhode Island children and adults with specialized healthcare needs are either not receiving enough nursing services in the home or are not able to access these lifesaving services due to the lack of available nurses – stemming from low Medicaid reimbursement rates. Last year alone we were unable to admit over 20 Medicaid referrals due to the hardships of finding staff.

Maxim commends the Governor and committee for including the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner’s (OHIC) rate recommendations for Medicaid provider reimbursement rates in the state’s budget especially for private duty nursing. Maxim supports the rate recommendations for certified nursing assistants (S5125), registered nurses (T1000), and licensed practical nurses (T1000 TE) procedure codes provided in OHIC’s September report. I am testifying today to request that the committee include 100% of OHIC’s rate recommendations to the state’s budget for the procedure codes stated instead of a 3 year phase in approach.

Our neighboring states have been investing in home health care by increasing the reimbursement rates to ensure competitiveness with hospitals and facilities. When there are sufficient reimbursement rates, providers are able to bring on more patients and secure adequate staffing. This is proven in our closest Massachusetts office which has over 75% retention compared to our Providence office with less than

60% retention. These new rates would allow us to compete with other states, provide a living wage to our specially trained nursing workforce and caregivers, and other expenses toward the total cost to deliver care at home. When the state invests in home health care, patients are able to access care in their home with family rather than being away from them in a more expensive setting like a facility or hospital.

Thank you for your support of home health care.

Jacob Auslander
Director of Operations