

Minnesota HomeCare Association

2017 Legislative Agenda

Approved by the MHCA Board of Directors on November 8, 2016

The MHCA believes that individuals should have access to necessary, cost effective, and evidenced-informed home care services and that the infrastructure for and access to such services be promoted in Minnesota. Accordingly, the MHCA supports and will actively work for legislative, administrative, and other initiatives that promote the following policies:

Address the Workforce Shortage. Direct care workers are critical to providing quality and cost effective services to individuals in their homes. Currently, a critical shortage of home care workers exists in communities across the state. It is essential to advance targeted funding for home care worker wages and health care benefits, and other strategies to effectively hire and maintain highly trained home care workers to provide needed services to vulnerable individuals throughout the state.

The MHCA supports efforts to address the shortage of quality health care workers by seeking targeted rate increases to provide wage increases and to increase access to health care benefits for direct care workers.

Reduce Medical Assistance Patient Costs. A trend has been for the government to require Medical Assistance patient financial participation when they receive needed health care services. These contribution mechanisms include the Medical Assistance Spenddown and patient co-pays. Unfortunately, these contributions divert needed resources from low income individuals and require providers to serve as a collection agency for the state—creating a potentially adversarial relationship with the patient and increases provider costs in collection expenses and in uncollectable charges, thus lowering the effective rate paid to providers for those services provided under Medical Assistance.

The MHCA supports initiatives to decrease the provider and client costs of the current Medical Assistance co-pay, and the spenddown income and asset limits. More specifically, the MHCA supports efforts to eliminate the co-pay; and, reduce the spenddown amount that clients have to pay.

Stabilize the Home Care Infrastructure. Funding levels for home care services are jeopardizing the sustainability of Minnesota's infrastructure of services for those individuals who need and want health and long term care services delivered in their homes. The current funding system does not support the long-term viability of home care services that are proven to be cost effective, high quality, and preferred by the individuals served.

The MHCA will lead efforts to reform the current rate system for home care services in the state to provide greater access to individuals in need of home care services by increasing the stability of the system and improving the quality of the services.

Other Home Care Issues. Many known and unknown issues will be of interest to MHCA members in 2017.

The MHCA will engage on issues as necessary to ensure a strong and viable home care system in Minnesota. This would include, but is not limited to, supporting certain PCA proposals and the Pediatric Home Care proposal; and, monitoring legislation related to a New Category of Home Care Worker, Remote Monitoring, Medicaid Face-to-Face, and Documentation of Home Health Aide supervision.