

Home Care Alliance of MA Verbal Testimony
Joint Committee on Elder Affairs
7/31/17 Hearing
1PM State House Room A-2
Re: H. 350 and S. 352

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on H. 350, and S. 352, a home care workforce initiative. We appreciate Chairwoman L'Italien's leadership on this issue.

I am Jake Krilovich, Director of Legislative and Public Affairs for the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts. I will be brief in my remarks, but will provide testimony on Section 1 of these bills before one of our members will testify in regard to the implications of this section.

Section one of H. 350 and S. 352 would expand the annual rate reviews to include home health agencies. As currently written, Section 13D of Chapter 118E requires the Executive Office of HHS to review and set rates for nursing homes and rest homes by October 1 of each year. This legislation before the committee would expand that annual review to include Home Health Agencies.

Currently, home health rate adjustments are at the discretion of MassHealth and are not reviewed on a schedule. The rates for skilled nursing, therapies and home health aides have not been analyzed or evaluated against the market or adjusted in ten years.

According to our annual compensation survey, Home Health Aides wages and benefits were \$13.49 in 2007 and \$15.95 in 2017. Without the State increasing their rates in that time, agencies have struggled to properly adjust wages for this workforce and has led to an over 20% turnover rate throughout the commonwealth.

It is imperative that home health agencies be included in an annual rate review, as this crisis is unsustainable and will continue to lead to home care service plans not being met.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these bills.