

Support Adult Care Facility (ACF) Providers that Serve Low Income Seniors

Increase the Congregate Care Level 3 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) rate for ACF residents

The Level 3 SSI rate pays just under \$41 per day, which falls about \$30 short of the average cost of providing ACF services. This gap will grow as the minimum wage mandate is phased in. The state has not increased its share of the SSI rate in ten years. If ACFs close or can't afford to continue to serve SSI/Medicaid-eligible seniors, more of these individuals will be placed in nursing homes at higher cost to the State. ***Our request: Increase the Level 3 SSI rate by at least \$20 per day per resident, and institute an annual cost of living adjustment to the state portion of the rate thereafter.***

Reinstate and Level Fund the Enriched Housing Subsidy

The Executive budget proposal moves the Enriched Housing Subsidy program to the "Health Outcomes and Advocacy" pool of programs; with aggregate funding reduced by twenty percent. The subsidy supports low income individuals to remain in as independent a setting as possible, and these enriched housing programs are struggling financially. If the programs close, these Medicaid-eligible residents are at risk of nursing home placement. ***Our request: Restore the Enriched Housing Subsidy as discrete line item, funded at last year's level of \$475,000.***

Expand the Assisted Living Program (ALP)

The ALP is an alternative to nursing home for lower-acuity seniors, providing services at approximately half the cost of a nursing home. It is the only Medicaid assisted living option in the state. This cost-saving program should be expanded to allow eligible applicants that can demonstrate need to develop ALP beds. In addition, existing ALPs should be able to expand their programs by nine or fewer beds through an expedited process. ***Our request: Expand the ALP by allowing a need-based application process, and allow existing ALPs to expand by nine or fewer beds through an expedited process.***

Allow ALPs Access to Existing Capital and Workforce Funds

ALPs, like many other Medicaid providers, are struggling financially and need financial support to address infrastructure and workforce needs. In addition, if ALPs could access capital funds to update their environment to better serve people with Alzheimer's and other dementias; this could save Medicaid dollars by preventing nursing home placement. Allowing ALPs access to the health care facility transformation program and Vital Access Provider (VAP) program are ways in which the ALP can remain financially viable and better serve Medicaid-eligible seniors, at no new cost to the state. ***Our request: Include language from A.1612 (Magnarelli) and A.1650 (Magnarelli) in the final budget, to enable ALPs to be eligible applicants for the Health Care Facility Transformation program and Vital Access Provider funding programs.***

Allow Nurses to Performing Nursing Services in ACF and Assisted Living Settings

Many ACFs in the state currently employ nurses, but their residents are not able to fully benefit given restrictions on the duties the nurses can perform. Currently, these professionals are permitted to provide nursing services only to residents of Enhanced Assisted Living Residences (EALRs). Only 10 percent of the total licensed ACFs in the state are also licensed as EALRs. Unfortunately, this means that capable nurses working in non-EALR settings can't provide services to residents. Instead, a third party must be brought in to serve the resident, often at cost to the resident. Ultimately, this limitation prevents nurses from providing services that would result in better health outcomes for the resident and support end of life care. ***Our request: Include language from A.2736 (Gottfried) in the final budget, which would allow ACFs to directly employ LPNs or RNs to provide nursing services.***

Maintain Level Funding for EQUAL

The Executive budget maintains level funding of \$6.5 million for quality funding program for ACFs; the Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) program. EQUAL supports quality of life initiatives for ACFs with SSI/Medicaid eligible residents. ***Our request: Maintain the Executive proposal to level fund EQUAL at \$6.5 million.***