



Support Home Care, Seniors, Caregivers, Small Businesses and the Economy

Home Care Association of America Connecticut advocates for employer-based home care agencies that employ, train, monitor and supervise caregivers; create a plan of care for the client; and work toward a safe and secure environment for the person at home. HCAOA Connecticut members employ several thousand caregivers providing quality, affordable home care to thousands of elderly consumers, persons with disabilities and veterans across the state. For additional information, visit www.hcaoa.org.

During the public health emergency, home care agencies have been on the front lines, **fighting to protect our most vulnerable citizens** – elderly and disabled persons – as well as caregivers who provide direct support to them. Seniors want to age in place in their own home, where they know they are safe and have largely remained free of exposure to transmission of coronavirus. Home care provides significant value to citizens and substantial cost savings to the state.

Policymakers can help the home care industry remain competitive in the state and allow agency owners to train and provide oversight of caregivers, offer greater safety, reduce costs and protect elderly consumers of home care, by:

- **Protecting home care consumers.** Home care workers should be able to provide nonmedical, supportive services that ensure a safe and healthy environment for clients in their home, including activities of daily living such as bathing and medication reminders. Agencies should be able to promote in their business names and advertising nonmedical care they provide to individuals who may have memory challenges. House Bill 6100 would have banned the use of such names and advertising by HCAs. The Department of Consumer Protection should not require costly, redundant and time-consuming state and national criminal history records checks, including fingerprinting, as proposed in HB 6100, that may result in less useful information about prospective employees and delay placement of caregivers in clients' homes. HCAOA Connecticut supports, as an alternative, comprehensive background

checks conducted by an accredited, pre-employment background screening services company that include a search of an online federal database and precluding agencies from employing caregivers who have committed specific crimes. (The bill was amended and approved accordingly by the General Law Committee.) Registries should be required to notify consumers that they are responsible to report compensation paid to the IRS, and are legally liable for work-related injuries as in Senate Bill 974.

- **Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates.** HCAOA Connecticut requests funding in the state budget for human services agencies, House Bill 6439, to the Department of Social Services to reimburse home care agencies participating in Medicaid programs. A nine percent increase in reimbursement would help agencies maintain current services and keep pace with ever-increasing costs. Sufficient funding is necessary to help offset recent cost increases for agencies, including minimum wage, extraordinary expenses occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, transportation and inflation.
- **Allowing agencies to enforce certain, limited non-solicitation agreements.** Home care workers trained by a company to work for a specific individual can convert consumers into private clients or take clients with them to a different agency. This puts agencies at risk of losing their business to the very people they hired and trained to care for their clients. Such nonsolicitation agreements are not banned for any other industry. Home care providers seek a limited, narrow exception to the law, as in Senate Bills 879 and 974, to allow them to enforce agreements that are customary in the industry for a limited period of time to protect consumers, employees and small businesses.
- **Rejecting a directory of home care workers.** A state directory, or registry, of home care workers has been proposed in prior legislative sessions that would require collection, submission and public disclosure to labor organizations of personal, identifying information about employees; and annual cost reports and audited financial statements of home care agencies. **HCAOA Connecticut opposes the registry** because it would weaken home care and hinder employment in the industry, raise significant personal privacy issues, harm small businesses, and create administrative burdens and additional costs for the state. It would not protect consumers nor would it serve any legitimate state interest, public purpose or policy.

April 12, 2021