



## HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES (HCBS) WORKFORCE CRISIS

There are 1.8 million elderly and disabled Georgians who are receiving care in their homes and communities. About 425,000 of these persons receive paid care by nurses or caregivers. Between 2016-2060, the population of those over 65 will nearly double. About 1 in 9 people are currently living with Alzheimer's and or Dementia. These trends and other health and longevity markers will continue to increase demand for home care.

### Down payment

Georgia State HCBS Associations request a rate increase be implemented during the 2023 legislative session, which the forthcoming rate study will justify. Rates need to get us closer to supporting at least a \$15 entry wage.

**While \$15 is not enough, it represents a step toward the state supporting this crucial care.**

### 10 % Increase

While a 10% increase will not allow us to compete with \$15/ hr. entry level jobs, it will begin to help HCBS providers address substandard wages, lack of a career ladder and unprecedented overtime due to workforce shortages.

**Current Medicaid reimbursement rates do not even cover inflation.**

### Full Funding

We urge full, immediate implementation of the **expected** increases recommended by the rate study.

**The time is now to commit to funding the actual costs of caring for and supporting this vulnerable population before more providers are forced out of the market.**

**Supporting Rationale:** CMS requires that states review waiver service payment methodologies and rates to ensure the rates are sufficient to maintain an adequate provider base qualified to deliver services. More than half of states (26-47) report annual or biennial payment rate updates using CPI or other measures (matching the Social Security increase, for example.)

### Potential Support Saving Items



1. Reimbursement for the program-required nurse supervisory visits
2. Consider legislation to create the Georgia Caregiver 1115 Medicaid Waiver Program for caregivers that maintain a minimum 30-hour work week in the care of elderly and disabled Georgians.
3. Consider personal care home clients attending Adult Day Health 5 times weekly (current limit is 2 days).

### SUMMARY

In Georgia the personal care aides and the rest of the direct care workforce who currently support individuals in the community, in the past 10 years have had incremental wage growth due to lack of adequate reimbursement. Wages remain FAR TOO LOW for this **vital** group of workers. As a result, home and community-based service (HCBS) providers are facing **severe recruitment and retention challenges** as they compete with other industries that can offer higher wages and benefits in a fiercely competitive labor market. The following are some of the reasons that the HCBS provider community continues to struggle:

- Due to workforce shortages, overtime levels are unprecedented; overtime has typically been in the 3% range but is now as high as 15%
- The home and community-based services industry does not have regulatory parity with nursing homes whose rates-unlike those of HCBS providers-are reviewed annually.

**Therefore, Georgia State Associations: The Georgia Association of Community Care Providers, The Home Care Association of America, and LeadingAge Georgia respectfully request a 10% increase in the Medicaid reimbursement rate for home and community-based services. Or better, a rate which supports entry level pay of \$15 per hour to be competitive in the market.**



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