

January 24, 2023

Hand-delivered



The Honorable Bruce W. Bannister, Chairman
Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
South Carolina House of Representatives
P.O. Box 11867
Columbia, S.C. 29211

Dear Representative Bannister and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

The South Carolina Home Care & Hospice Association (“SCHCHA”) is a nonprofit trade association representing providers of home care, home health, hospice, and palliative care. The Association was established in 1979, and currently has a membership of over 250 provider agencies and business affiliates who offer products and services to providers. SCHCHA is continually advocating for our members as part of our mission, and we are appreciative of this opportunity to provide comments.

The purpose of this letter is to offer support for the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) 2023-24 Department Budget Plan and the \$30.5 million SCDHHS has requested in recurring funding to support HCBS waiver programs. SCDHHS has worked with stakeholders over the last several years to address workforce issues in the state’s HCBS waiver programs, including in the areas of personal care services and private duty nursing, by raising reimbursement rates and making prudent policy changes to the HCBS waiver programs.

According to a [South Carolina Institute of Medicine & Public Health study in 2022](#), over the last decade, South Carolina direct care workers’ median annual salaries have only increased by \$0.20 and averaged \$11.73/hour in 2020. Further, the study revealed that twenty-two percent (22%) of direct care workers in South Carolina live below the federal poverty level (FPL) and South Carolina is tied with Texas and Idaho for fourth highest percent of direct care workers living below the FPL out of 50 states and the District of Columbia. Personal care and home health aides make up the largest segment of the direct care workforce.

The SCDHHS 2023-24 Department Budget Plan makes steps forward to address these issues through comprehensive review and HCBS rate restructure to strive for a more adequate reimbursement rate based on the skill and training necessary for different types of in-home care. SCHCHA agrees with SCDHHS that this restructuring will support a “more appropriately trained and accurately compensated workforce and a higher quality of care for the Healthy Connections Medicaid members who receive in-home care.”

The number of people living with disabilities and chronic conditions in South Carolina is growing, as noted in the 2022 South Carolina Institute of Medicine & Public Health study. Additionally, the South Carolina Department on Aging estimates that South Carolina will double its senior population by 2030. With a growing population of need and many health concerns due to aging and chronic illness treatable at home,

South Carolina Home & Hospice Care Association

3101 Industrial Dr., Suite 204, Raleigh, NC 27609 | schcha.org | 919.848.3450 (T) 919.848.2355 (F)

we appreciate and support the work SCDHHS has done to combat home care workforce issues and improve quality of care for those receiving in-home services. We offer our support for the SCDHHS 2023-24 Budget Plan and respectfully request your consideration to appropriate the \$30.5 million SCDHHS has requested in recurring funding to help address the workforce and in-home care service needs stated in this letter.

* * *

On behalf of SCHCHA's members, we thank you for your consideration of this letter of support, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss any additional questions you may have regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy R. Rogers
President and CEO
South Carolina Home Care & Hospice Association

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