

# NYS HOME CARE CRISIS CAMPAIGN ACTION STEPS



So much attention has been paid to the home care worker crisis – thanks to the many coalition members and partner organizations that have raised awareness with state legislators and in the media. Now it's time to continue the advocacy and urge action for the next state budget. Budget negotiations start with the State Agencies and Governor, who start to prepare the proposed budget in September.

## **Talking Points:**

- Both the Medicaid and Non-Medicaid populations are underserved.
- Regardless of a person's income, there simply are not adequate home health aide services available to provide care to those who need it and are authorized to receive it.
- Adjustments in rates must be accountable and transparent.
- A public campaign is essential to overcome a negative image of home care workers and rebrand the workforce as paraprofessionals.
- Convene a Stakeholder Task Force including consumers to brainstorm and make recommendations.

Here is a list of activities to keep the momentum going this Summer and early Fall, 2017.

## **I. Complete the Campaign's questionnaire. (Please see attached survey)**

## **II. Focus on Governor and State Agencies**

The Governor's office and state agencies are driven by data – and public concerns. If you are part of an agency responsible for home care services, your data on cases approved but not served (including fulfillment of total approved hours of service, delayed start to provision of services, or waiting lists and unmet need), you have vital information to share. During the NYS Assembly hearing, the state's Medicaid director said he was unaware of any problems related to Medicaid managed care providers having insufficient capacity to meet home care demands. He also indicated that other departments in the Health Department bureaucracy that deal with access to care were not reporting problems, except in a handful of cases where they had intervened. If you are experiencing problems, whether it is Medicaid, Medicare, private pay or EISEP, you must let the Governor, the Department of Health and the NYS Office for Aging know.

1. Call Governor Cuomo's office, 518-474-8390. This automated line allows you to leave a message with an idea to improve government services or you can push "2" to speak with an operator directly to express your concerns.

**Message:** I am calling from (region of state or city/town) and I am concerned about the shortage of home care workers. People who need care to remain living at home with the dignity they deserve are not receiving personal care, regardless of the source of payment (Medicaid, EISEP, private pay.) We need the Governor to develop recruitment and retention strategies to encourage more people to become home care workers. I urge him to address this in his State of the State and Budget messages.

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2. Call the Governor's regional office to discuss your concerns, bringing a more local flavor to the discussion.
3. Call your [regional Department of Health](#) office. Tell them about problems accessing home care services.
4. Call the NYS Department of Health Division of Home and Community Based Care Complaint Line - 800-628-5972. Tell them about problems accessing home care services. Or send an e-mail to [homecare@health.ny.gov](mailto:homecare@health.ny.gov)
5. If you have information about lack of home care capacity in Medicaid Managed Long Term Care, call the NYS Department of Health Bureau of Managed Long Term Care, 866-712-7197
6. Raise the issue with your county's Long Term Care Advisory Committee. Call your [County NY Connects contact](#) to ask to have the home care crisis added to the agenda, and also convey your concerns to the NY Connects contact.
7. Call the NYS Office for Aging helpline 1-844-697-6321 and let them know your concerns. They will likely tell you to call your County Office for the Aging, but tell them you want them shared with the Director of the state Office for the Aging.

### **III. Focus on State Legislature**

There are several bills pending that address problems recruiting and retaining home health workers by adjusting the Medicaid rates. Ultimately, improvements in how Medicaid pays for home health care will improve access for all residents by improving the fiscal solvency of the local home care agencies. Much more is needed, including the involvement of local workforce development agencies and a public relations campaign to recruit, train, and retain future workers. You can discuss all of these issues with your state Assembly member and Senator. To find out who represents you in state government and to get their contact information, [use this link](#).

1. Call your legislators' district offices to set up an appointment. It is fine to meet with staff if the elected official is not available. You may also want to bring other coalition members with you to an appointment to discuss the impact of the home care worker shortage.
2. Ask your legislators to co-sponsor pending legislation.
  - A. Ask your Assembly member to sign on as a sponsor to two bills.
    - i. Assemblyman Jones' bill, A. 6791, deals with Medicaid reimbursement for home care in rural areas. [Read more about it here](#). The following Assembly members already co-sponsor the bill: Cook, Crouch, Dickens, D'Urso, Finch, Graf, Harris, Jaffee, McLaughlin, Montesano, Pheffer Amato, Simon, Steck. If they represent your area thank them and proceed to iii.

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- ii. Assemblyman Gottfried's bill, A.6706, deals with improving the rate for Medicaid home care throughout the state. [Read more about it here](#). The following Assemblymembers already co-sponsor the bill: Abinanti, Barrett, Dickens, Jaffee, Jones, Lupardo, Mayer, McDonald, Raia, Simon, Steck, Titus, Wallace, Wright. If they represent your area thank them and proceed to iii.
  - iii. Ask your Assembly member to contact Health Committee Chair Gottfried's office to see how they can help advance solutions to the home care crisis.
- B. Ask your Senator to sign on as a sponsor to two bills.
- i. Senator Little's bill, S.5479, deals with rural shortages. [Read more about it here](#).
  - ii. Senator Hannon's bill, S.4848, deals with improving the rate for Medicaid. [Read more about it here](#).
  - iii. Ask your Senator to contact Health Committee Chair Hannon's office to see how they can help advance solutions to the home care crisis.

## **IV. Focus on Media**

Your local newspaper and television news reporters can help raise awareness about the local impact of the home care crisis. This coverage will also help to persuade legislators and the Governor's office that the issues need to be addressed.

1. Contact local television stations and newspapers to speak with the reporter that covers health issues. Give them background information on the problem. (A draft press release is attached for you to adapt to your local area.)
2. Identify (if possible) a local resident who has had problems who is willing to be interviewed. Other than a client, a family caregiver who has not been able to hire a home health aide or personal care assistant for a loved one is a good spokesperson on the issue and impact of the shortage.
3. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper describing the home care crisis and urging the Governor to address concerns.
4. Invite the local media to attend the NY Connects Long Term Care Advisory Committee if you are able to get the issue on their agenda.

## **V. Report back to the Coalition**

Let us know how you are doing, which steps you were able to accomplish, what barriers you may have faced, and what help/support you would like. Email: [maconsult@aol.com](mailto:maconsult@aol.com)

**STATE  WIDE**

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