

October 23, 2018

Richard Whitley, Director
Department of Health and Human Services
4126 Technology Way, Suite 100
Carson City, NV 89706

Dear Director Whitley:

The Nevada Commission on Aging is writing this letter respectfully requesting a review in the upcoming budget on the current Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) budgeted caseload and eligibility process for the Frail Elderly (FE) Waiver.

Waiver Slots

Waiver slots keep older adults living in the community as opposed to being placed in an institutional setting. Waivers provide access to an array of community-based services including: personal care (bathing, grooming, toileting, transferring/ambulation, dressing, eating); adult day care; respite; homemaker services; chore services; and, adult companion. Costs for community-based services are significantly less than for a nursing home placement.

Currently, there are more than 528 older adults waiting more than 4 months for access to the FE HCBS waiver. While waiting to receive a waiver, these individuals are at risk of increased health issues and nursing home placement. Slots for waiver services are insufficient to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population.

The Nevada Commission on Aging supports increased budget authority to address waiver slots and eliminate the waiting period.

Eligibility Process

The Waiver eligibility process involves three (3) state agencies and can span a total of 120 days for a final decision as follows:

Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) –

- Screens for eligibility within 15 days of receipt of application to determine preliminary eligibility.
- Completes an in-person assessment within 45 days of application for individuals determined with preliminary eligibility.
- Sends application packet to Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) for final eligibility determination.

Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) –

- Completes a desk review, requests financials and all required documentation to verify eligibility within 45 days.
- Final eligibility determination is communicated to ADSD for action.

Nevada Division of Healthcare Financing and Policy (DHCFP)-

- DHCFP receives final waiver approval from ADSD for an administrative review and approval.
- DHCFP has 15 days to make the final determination and system changes to implement services.

The current process is complex for older adults to navigate, time intensive, and does not support access to services at a reasonable pace.

The Nevada Commission on Aging would recommend a streamlined eligibility process for HCBS Waivers to keep people in their homes, avoid institutionalization, and save taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,