

Steve Sisolak
Governor

Richard Whitley, MS
Director



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Dena Schmidt
Administrator

July 19, 2022

Director Richard Whitley
Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
400 W. King St, Ste 300
Carson City, NV 89703

Dear Director Richard Whitley,

The Commission on Aging's mission is to facilitate and enhance the quality of life and services for all Nevada seniors through partnership with the Aging and Disability Services Division and other entities. The Commission has been meeting quarterly over the past two years and has reviewed and discussed numerous policy and budget recommendations. We offer this letter of support for the following budget concepts which are crucial to meeting the mission and vision of the Commission on Aging.

Increasing Home and Community Based Medicaid Rates

ADSD does not currently have the necessary Home and Community Based Services needed to keep people out of institutions which is severely concerning. Monitoring home and community-based Medicaid rates, including personal care services rates is something we feel is extremely important to the commission.

Nurse to Resident Ratio

Health Care Quality and Compliance (HCQC) presented a report that showed nationwide about 75% of skilled nursing facilities currently do not meet the guidelines that Centers for Medicare and Medicaid has issued for staffing. This issue is tied to Medicaid rates and the need to support the critical front-line workforce in Nevada.

Home Delivered Meals added to the Frail Elderly (FE) Waiver

Currently the Frail Elderly Waiver does not provide any meal services. The Aging and Disability Services Division and Division of Health Care Financing and Policy staff presented to the commission in March of 2021 and discussed options to include home delivered meals as a service to the Frail Elderly waiver. The home delivered meals would benefit nutrition to those in need and align services between the physically disabled and frail elderly waivers.

Funding for Home and Community Based Services to eliminate the waitlist

Currently there is a need to address the Home and Community Based Service waitlists. The Frail Elderly, Physically Disabled as well as the Personal Assistance and Community Options Program for the Elderly reported waitlist with several exceeding 90 days. Discussion regarding the processing time or 90 days and workforce retention are the current challenges.

Increasing the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)

Currently the personal needs allowance of \$35.00 for individuals in skilled nursing and HCBS is one that according to welfare staff has been in place since 1995 or 1996 and has not increased at all. The COA would like to advocate for a PNA raise to as much as \$50-\$60.

Dementia Crisis Services

Due to the lack of dementia crisis services in Nevada, the recommendation is to study a program outside of Wisconsin to add dementia care specialist, particularly in rural counties to serve as a point of contact.

Vulnerable Adult Protection Orders

This protection order fills a gap in our state law to provide that Adult Protective Services could seek out an order on behalf on the individual or an individual can seek an order out on their own. The situations faced by adults and persons with disabilities are unique and this provides a mechanism for them to seek relief that doesn't currently exist.

Structured Family Care Program

Recognizing their importance, state Medicaid agencies already support family caregivers through training, services, or, sometimes payment. However, there is strong evidence that family caregivers could benefit from additional supports, especially those targeted to meet caregivers' specific needs. These supports would, in turn, benefit the Medicaid enrollees receiving their care. Nevada should consider implementing a Structured Family Caregiver Program. This could be done as an amendment to the existing Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver for the Frail Elderly or as a new HCBS waiver.

Respectfully,

Senator, Joe Hardy
Member, COA

Assemblywoman,
Clara Thomas
Member, COA

Dena Schmidt, Administrator
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