

PLATFORM FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION



SENIOR ACTION WEEK: MAY 15-19, 2023

OLDER MICHIGANIANS DAY: MAY 17, 2023

Support Family and Informal Caregivers

Family and Kinship caregivers provide essential care to older adults and loved ones. It is estimated that 23% of Michiganians provide unpaid, informal care and are the largest source of long-term services and supports in the country. With the continuing direct care workforce shortage, support for caregivers is even more important to assist older adults in their homes. Without continued family-provided help, the cost to Michigan's health and Long-Term Services and Supports systems will skyrocket.

ACTION: Urge policymakers to invest one time funding of \$16.8 million to develop and implement a Caregiver Resource Center model designed to identify, serve, and support caregivers.

ACTION: Support policies that provide family and informal caregivers with financial security and other resources.

Support and Strengthen the Direct Care Workforce

Direct care workers (DCW) are essential for older adults planning to age in place. In Michigan, an estimated 36,000 more direct care workers are needed to meet demand but due to low wages, a lack of professional development, and the absence of benefits, it is difficult to attract and retain these workers. There is currently no federal training standard to professionalize the direct care workforce.

ACTION: Support the DCW Wage and Training Workgroup's recommendation of a \$4 per hour DCW wage increase.

ACTION: Support the professionalization of the direct care worker network through training, creating opportunity for advancement, and increasing wages and benefits.

Support & Strengthen the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsmen work with residents of licensed long-term care facilities such as nursing homes (NH), home for the aged (HFA), and adult foster care (AFC) homes with a goal of improving quality care for residents. A recent review of the ombudsman program found that to reach the recommended minimum staff-to-bed ratio of 1:2000, Michigan needs to add 33 more full-time ombudsmen. The funding formula used to distribute Ombudsman funding has also not been updated since 1987.

ACTION: Urge the Legislature to adequately staff Michigan's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program by adding 33 new full-time positions at an estimated total cost of \$3 million.

ACTION: Urge the Commission on Services to the Aging to update the Ombudsman Funding Formula to distribute increased funds based on current demographic data.

Increase Access to Home and Community-Based Services

In Michigan, there are currently 7,270 seniors on waiting lists for essential non-Medicaid in-home services provided through Michigan's Administration for Community Living Supports (ACLS). ACLS funded services include home delivered meals, in-home personal care, homemaking, and respite care that delay or prevent the need for more costly long-term care interventions.

ACTION: Support the Silver Key Coalition's request for a \$9 million increase for ACLS in-home services and a \$1 million increase for home delivered meals in ACLS' FY 2024 budget.

Expand Access to MI Choice

Michigan ranks near the bottom in the proportion of taxpayer dollars spent by states to provide long-term care through home and community-based services (HCBS) versus institutional care. In Michigan during Fiscal Year 2019, only 37% of Long-term Services and Supports (LTSS) funding was allocated to HCBS while 63% went to institutional settings. The MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program is an in-home service program that enables seniors and adults with a disability who meet eligibility requirements to receive LTSS in their home rather than a nursing facility.

ACTION: Urge MDHHS to raise the MI Choice reimbursement rates to keep up with inflation and the increased costs of providing care.

ACTION: Urge the legislature to bring equity between HCBS and institutional care by rebalancing state expenditures.