

## **SUBJECT: BUDGET REQUEST - SUPPORT MEDICAID FUNDED AGENCIES & WORKFORCE**

Dear **Representative / Senator**:

Now is the greatest time of need for home care, adult day service and housing stabilization providers as they continue to combat the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the staffing crisis we now face. Adequate funding levels are necessary to ensure that providers can begin to increase wages to retain current staff, as well as to recruit new staff to fill the all-time high vacancies we face.

### **Call to Action**

Please ask budget negotiators to support the following in the 2022 Supplemental Budget:

- Maintain COVID-19 Rate Enhancement for home care agencies through 2023 and beyond.
- Include an annual 2% increase for the Home Care Administrative Rate (\$2.2mil Annual GFS with 50% federal match) if COVID-19 Enhancement Rates are not extended beyond 2023.
- Permanently increase adult day service provider rates by \$11.08 (\$310,000 Annual GFS with 50% federal match).
- Support ESHB 1866 on the Senate Floor and match the House operating and capital budget investments in the Apple Health and Homes Act.

### **Adult Day Services**

Adult day health provides skilled nursing therapy, transportation, meals, personal care, and social services to adults with chronic health conditions. Full Life Care operates three adult day centers in the Puget Sound. Our programs provide an alternative to much more expensive stays in skilled nursing facilities and hospitals.

We appreciate the funding the Senate included to permanently increase provider rates by \$11.08 and urge the House to support a floor amendment into the budget or to advocate adoption of the Senate funding levels for adult day providers in the budget conference process. If this funding is not adopted in the final budget, providers will struggle to stabilize as our centers begin to reopen for in-person programming as we recover from the pandemic. We will also not be able to hire the required number of staff to meet our ratios to serve our clients. Providers need these rates to continue as it is clear that many of the new safety protocols now in place will remain after the pandemic is brought under control.

### **Home Care**

Our reliable caregivers provide vital, in-home support to elders and adults with disabilities in King County. Our caregivers do amazing work, and our agencies deserve adequate funding to support administrative staff and functions that facilitate this essential work serving thousands of our most vulnerable Washingtonians.

While we appreciate that the budget proposals provide for a gradual phase out of the COVID-19 enhanced vendor rates, we do not feel July 1, 2022, is the right time to be reducing this badly needed support for the state's Medicaid home care agencies. Continuing the current enhanced rate levels through the end of calendar year 2022 will go a long way to further stabilize the administrative operations that provide critical support to our caregivers and clients. The pandemic may be winding

down, but the impact it has had on home care clients, caregivers and agencies will continue to be felt for months, if not years.

### **Housing Stabilization**

Homelessness and housing needs are at emergency levels across many communities in Washington state. Full Life Care provides outreach services to adults who want a home but need someone to show them the path. We also work with people whose housing is precarious – whether its because a person needs some temporary rent assistance, because they need help locating an apartment that is ADA accessible, or because they are short on that most precious of all commodities – HOPE.

Our outreach staff partners with other providers to create a web of resources – this is the proverbial “safety net.” Yet this collaborating work is largely unfunded! You can change that.

Thank you for your support of our agency, caregivers, and the vulnerable clients we serve.

Sincerely,

**NAME**

**POSITION**

**AGENCY**