

ACT TODAY: Urge Your State Lawmakers to Support a Medicaid Rate Increase for Skilled Nursing in a Home Health Care Setting

The 2021-23 Wisconsin state budget bill was unveiled by Governor Tony Evers (D) in February and now resides in the hands of the Republican-controlled Legislature. Unfortunately, the \$91 billion, two-year spending plan for the state as proposed by the governor DID NOT include a long-overdue Medicaid rate increase for skilled nursing provided in a home health care setting. However, lawmakers, who are currently holding public hearings on the Governor's proposal, are expected to significantly rewrite the budget bill and can include a Medicaid rate increase for skilled home health care.

With that in mind, WiAHC is asking you to please contact your state lawmakers TODAY and urge them to support a Medicaid rate increase for home health care skilled nursing in the state budget bill.

BACKGROUND:

Operating in communities through the state, home health care agencies provide a variety of health care services provided in the homes of patients and are integral to comprehensive post-acute medical care in Wisconsin. In addition to offering quality, convenient care to patients in the comfort of their own homes, home health care agencies provide cost effective care that reduces the financial burden for patients as well as public and private payers.

Unfortunately, current Medicaid reimbursement levels make it difficult to operate home health care agencies due to the problems it creates, including workforce retention and patient access challenges. In fact, the Medicaid reimbursement rate for Wisconsin home health care skilled nursing has not been increased in over a decade and has created a crisis in the industry. In short, the state's home health care agencies must receive an increase to sustain their skilled nursing services in Wisconsin.

During the 2019-20 legislative session, WiAHC advocated for legislation to increase reimbursement rates to \$94.10. The non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau found the increase would only cost the state \$300,000 per year – or just 0.009% of the state's \$6.7 billion biennial Medicaid budget.

Even that modest additional investment will have a significant impact on home health care in Wisconsin. It will serve to strengthen the home health care workforce, increase patient access to care in their own homes, and ultimately reduce state spending by shifting certain patients away from expensive institutional-care facilities for post-acute care.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

E-mail your state legislators today and urge them to support a Medicaid rate increase for home health care skilled nursing services. Please feel free to use WiAHC's [sample e-mail](#) when contacting your lawmakers. All you need to do is cut-and-paste it into an e-mail, but please consider personalizing your e-mail to include examples of your experiences that capture the workforce and patient access challenges created by stagnant Medicaid compensation.

If you don't know who your state legislators are, or do not have their contact information, simply [CLICK HERE](#) and type your home address in the upper right corner text box. Remember to contact both your state senator and state representative.

If you have any questions on this WiAHC *Advocacy Action Alert* request or would like additional information on the issue, please contact WiAHC at erik@hovenconsulting.com or tim@hovenconsulting.com.

ACTION ALERT RESOURCES:

- [Sample e-mail to legislators](#)
- [WiAHC Medicaid Issue Overview](#)
- [Op-Ed: "Limited workforce leads to limited care capacity"](#).