

LONG TERM CARE COORDINATING COUNCIL
Aging in Community Subcommittee
Legislative Wrap-up Report
Maureen Maigret
June 27, 2022

As Chair of the Subcommittee, I testified to promote legislation supportive of Aging in Community based on the Subcommittee’s Strategic Plan (December 2016) and 2020 Progress report as well as issues supported by the full Long Term Care Coordinating Council. Below is a summary of bills supported and their status as the 2022 legislative session adjourned on June 23rd.

Legislative Bills and State Budget Items Supported and Final Status

1.	<p>2311 Sen DiPalma and H7180 Rep. Casimiro Relating to Human-Services-Social + Human Services Programs Rate Review and Rate Setting Process. <u>Supports @ Home. Strategic Action #1</u> Status: Bills heard in both House and Senate and language incorporated into Article 12 Relating to Medical Assistance, Section (t) of the FY2023 Budget bill (H7123Aaa) includes language requiring the Health Insurance Commissioner to hire necessary staff and hire a firm to undertake a comprehensive review of all social and human service programs having a contract with the state or licensed by the state for purposes of developing baseline of eligibility factors, baseline for understanding reimbursement rates, ensuring accurate and adequate reimbursement to facilitate availability of high quality services to individuals receiving home and community-based services and supports, ensuring general assembly is provided with adequate financial projections on social and human services costs, service demands and workforce needs. Assessment of rates to be completed by January 1, 2023; of national and regional Medicaid rates comparison by April 1, 2023; of private insurance and private rates by April 1, 2023; recommended rate adjustments by September 1, 2023 and biennially thereafter. Note: \$1.5million was included in the budget to conduct the required reviews and analyses.</p>
2.	<p>S2200 by Sen. DiPalma; H7489 by Rep. Casimiro Rate Setting Commission of Health/Human Services Clinical and Medical Services <u>Supports @ Home. Strategic Actions #1 and #5</u> See Above Status of S2311 and H7180</p>
3.	<p>S2648 by Sen. DiPalma</p>

	<p>Jt. Resolution making Appropriation of \$17,700,000 for purposes of increasing rates to be used for wage pass through to direct care staff and for increases in payments to direct care workers hired by consumers through self-directed programs <u>Supported by LTCCC.</u> <u>Supports @ Home. Strategic Action #1</u> Status: <u>Resolution heard in Senate and held for further study</u> <u>FY2023 Budget includes \$7.5million (all funds) to increase reimbursement rates paid to home health agencies for CNAs and homemakers from \$13 and \$11/hour to \$15/hour.</u></p>
4.	<p>H7127 Rep. Ruggiero Relating to Property Tax Relief S2192 Sen. Coyne Would increase the total amount of income to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) per household to claim the state-funded property tax relief credit as well as the maximum credit amount to eight hundred fifty dollars (\$850) and mandate that the income ranges and credits be adjusted annually for inflation. <u>Housing Domain. Strategic Action #2</u> Status: H7127 Heard in House and held for further study; S2192 passed Senate as SubA. Article 6, Section 11. of FY2023 Budget bill (H7123Aaa) includes provision to increase income eligibility to \$35,000; amount of credit or refund to \$600 and includes annual inflation adjustment.</p>
5.	<p>H7123 State Budget. Article 1 Advances affordable housing through a comprehensive array of funding elements. <u>Supports Strategic Plan Housing Domain.</u> Status: \$250,000,000 included in Article 1 of FY2023 Budget bill</p> <p>Article 12, Section 6. Suspends Perry/ Sullivan funding. <u>Opposed by LTCCC</u> Status: Suspension of “Perry/Sullivan” funds Not included in FY2023 Budget bill. Several additions to Budget address strengthening home and community services including: \$7.5million (all funds) for home care provider rate reimbursements to bring CNA + homemaker wages up to \$15/hour \$300,000 (all funds) to increase Independent Provider Rates from \$13.82 to \$15/hour to include employer-related expenses to bring reimbursement to \$17.27</p>

	<p>\$10million (all funds) for Long Term Care Rebalancing Support This could include retention and recruitment support, reimbursements for education and certification expenses, and new or renewed licenses.</p> <p>\$12.5million to increase Personal Choice Program Rates to increase rates paid to personal care aides from \$17.17 to \$24.17</p>
6.	<p>H7942 by Ackerman and S2623 by Kallman. Revises definition of Accessory Dwelling Unit, sets criteria for municipality not imposing excessive restrictions and counting as part of low and moderate affordable housing.</p> <p>Housing Domain. Strategic Action #5</p> <p>Status: Bills heard and H7942B passed in concurrence; S2623A passed in concurrence.</p>
7.	<p>S2407 Sen DiPalma; H7390 Rep. Shanley</p> <p>Relating to State Affairs + Government—Office of Health + Human Services – Minimum Wage for Providers. Would require state contracted human services providers to pay their employees a starting hourly wage, of no less than twenty-one dollars (\$21.00) per hour, and to include wage incremental raises for existing employees.</p> <p><u>Supports @ Home. Strategic Action #1</u></p> <p>Status: Bills heard. Not passed. See note on # 3 above relating to FY2023 Budget bill</p>
8.	<p>H7445 by Rep. Alzate; S2196 by Sen Cano</p> <p>Increases eligibility for the three (3) federal Medicare Savings Programs to 185%, 200% and 225% and eliminates the asset test for these programs.)</p> <p><u>Supports @ Home. Strategic Action #2</u></p> <p>Status: Bills heard and held for further study</p>
9.	<p>H7859 by Rep. Tanzi</p> <p>Increases Medicaid eligibility for persons age 65 and over and adults with disabilities to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level to be consistent with other Medicaid population groups.</p> <p>Economic Security. Strategic Action #3</p> <p>Status; Bill heard and held for further study</p>
10.	<p>H7756 by Rep. Donovan; S2588 by Sen. DiPalma</p> <p>Would require State Plan amendment to raise mobile dentistry to \$180</p> <p><u>Healthcare Access Domain. Strategic Action #3</u></p> <p><u>Supported by LTCCC</u></p> <p>Status: H7756 heard and held for further study. S2588 held on Senate desk. \$8.1million (all funds) added to budget to increase selected Medicaid dental services</p>

11.	<p>S2245 by Sen. Lawson; H7444 by Rep. Cassar and H7551 Rep. Kazarian Bills expand the Temporary Caregiver Insurance Law <u>Supports @ Home. Strategic Action #9</u> Status: Bills heard and held for further study</p>
12.	<p>House Bill No. 7559 SUB A by Speakman, Carson & others Requires operators of nursing homes to provide the department of health with detailed information on ownership and any person having an interest in the land, building or operation of the facility. Status: Passed House & Senate, transmitted to Governor.</p>
<p>Additional Legislation + Budget Items of Interest to Aging in Community</p>	
<p>Livable Home Modification. \$500,000 general revenues added to budget for total funding of \$1.0 million for the Livable Home Modification Grant program. The program provides 50.0 percent of the total retrofit costs, up to \$4,000, to support home modifications and accessibility enhancements to allow individuals to remain in community settings. The increase is intended to be one-time to address a surge in applications</p> <p>Meals on Wheels. \$400,000 to increase rates including therapeutic and culturally appropriate meals.</p> <p>Senior Services Supports. \$200,000 additional funds in Office of Healthy Aging budget bringing total funding to \$1million, a 25% increase.</p> <p>SNAP Benefits Streamline Application. The Department has requested a waiver from the Federal Nutrition Service to streamline the application process for elderly and disabled individuals seeking Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. Assuming approval of the waiver, the House Finance Committee adds \$0.3 million from federal funds for benefit payments and \$5,000 from general revenues for outreach.</p> <p>SNAP Pilot. \$11.5 million general revenues added to budget by legislature to launch a retail Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pilot program. This includes funding for information technology upgrades and assumes the pilot will begin January 1, 2023. Eligible households would receive an incentive payment of \$0.50 for every \$1.00 spent on fruits and vegetables, up to a maximum amount to be determined by the department, loaded onto their electronic benefits transfer cards.</p>	

R-Line - Free Service Pilot. \$2.5 million from State Fiscal Recovery funds will support a free fare bus route service pilot program along the R-Line. This one-year pilot program will begin on September 1, 2022. The Authority will track ridership data and submit a report to the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, and the Governor by March 1, 2024.

Paratransit Study. RIPTA directed to use \$75,000 of gas tax revenue for a statewide transit access study for passengers with disabilities