

Home Care, Home Health and Hospice Update Regarding COVID-19

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AHHC of NC History and Mission

The Association for Home & Hospice Care of North Carolina (AHHC) is a nonprofit trade association representing providers of home health (98% in NC), hospice (98% in NC), palliative care, personal care, private duty nursing and companion/sitter services.

The Association was established in 1972 and currently has a membership of over 750 provider agencies and business partners, who provide products and services to providers. AHHC's mission is to provide **Resources, Education, Advocacy and Leadership**.



Overview of the Industry

- There are 1,184 licensed in-home aide providers, over 200 Medicare-certified home health providers, and over 200 hospice providers in the state.
- These providers serve approximately 100,000 patients per year and employ around 400,000 persons from Murphy to Manteo.
- There is a **still** a severe need for PPE for most front line workers who touch patients to care for them.
- Some workers have applied for unemployment because they are scared.
- The industry has lost 1.4 million workers nationwide as of this week.



On-going work with the Division of Health Benefits or DHB

- Increase in the Federal Matching funds or FMAP of 6.2% at the beginning of the pandemic. NC was one of 2 or 3 states across the country who passed down the FMAP increase to most providers in the way of a 5% rate increase effective in early March.
- Update after the first phase of the COVID legislation passed with special appreciation of what this HCWG helped facilitate.
 - Medicaid Bulletin announcing additional temporary rate increases of 10% for some providers this past Monday.

Recommendations for the next phase of COVID Relief

#1 **PPE assistance** for home and community-based care providers

- Phase 1 COVID-19 legislation focused on PPE for congregate settings such as hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living which was the correct approach
- Phase 2 will hopefully provide a relief fund to the Association for Home and Hospice Care which is a non-profit trade Association who can get PPE/funding to the front lines in the community. Others may qualify as well.
 - Requesting \$3.75 Million (comparable to the Health Care Facilities Association and the NC Senior Living Association)

Recommendations for the next phase of COVID Relief

Here is what phase 2 could look like in the community for PPE and supplies within the \$3.75 Million request:

- ✓ Supplies and equipment purchased in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines
- ✓ Rapidly ramping up infection control and triage training for health care professionals
- ✓ Offset increased staff time spent to mitigate the burden of extensive review of new and incoming federal and state regulatory guidelines
- ✓ Salary support for furloughed employees

AHHC COVID-19 PPE/Supply Impact Survey Highlights

- 86% of home care & hospice agencies who responded have indicated the level of difficulty in obtaining PPE to be difficult to very difficult.
- Home care agencies are obtaining limited PPE either through donations from the community or by going through several supply channels/vendors with varying reliability.
- Along with the availability of PPE and the reliability of vendors, cost was identified as a limitation to obtaining PPE.
- Many home care agencies are small businesses and do not have bulk purchasing power.

Recommendations for the next phase of COVID Relief continued...

- **#2 Rate Increases:** turn *temporary* Medicaid rate increases to *permanent* whether this is through phase 2 of COVID and/or the budget process later on.
- Temporary rate increases due to COVID-19 are extremely appreciated at this time due to the circumstances.
- The current temporary rate increases implemented so far only get most providers close to the national averages in their respected service areas. These rates have needed to be increased to the national average for several years now.

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