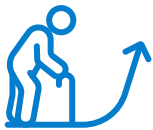


2025 SC Home Care & Hospice Advocacy Day

Home care and hospice providers and the direct care workers they employ who work tirelessly every day to ensure South Carolina's seniors, medically fragile children, and adults living with disability receive the care they need in the comfort of their homes. However, providers across the home health care continuum, and those in both Medicaid and private pay, continue to struggle to meet the demand for care amidst an intensifying workforce crisis.



South Carolina's population of adults older than **65 will almost double, to an estimated 2.7 million**, within the next two decades

47th

South Carolina ranks **47th** in the availability of home health and personal care aides.

79%

According to a 2024 Activated Insights Benchmarking report, the current **industry-wide turnover rate is 79.2%**.

Consequences of Home Care Workforce Shortages:



- Risk of hospitalization, ER visits, & re-hospitalizations
- Family caregivers calling out of work & risking job loss
- Longer hospital stays due to lack of staff available to transition home
- In-home caregiver burn out & stress
- Necessary care that keeps patients safe & healthy at home
- Family income – due to job loss or loss of work hours
- Bonding time between family members
- Continuity of care

Increasing Investment in Critical Medicaid HCBS Programs

We are grateful for DHHS' and the General Assembly's continued support of the over **40,000** South Carolinians who receive the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services. In-home care keeps vulnerable individuals safely cared for at-home at an overall cost-savings to the state.

However, as the state looks ahead to the FY 2027 budget, we believe the following investments are necessary to stabilize access to care in our state:

- **Increase the Companion Rate from \$14/hr to \$25/hr.** Companion hours are being used to supplement personal care hours, but providers are simply unable to staff cases at this low of a rate, which results in gaps in care. ***This service line is in need of immediate investment.***
- **Increase the Personal Care Services from \$25/hr to \$31.50/hr.**
- **Increase the Private Duty Nursing rates by \$5 an hour (\$55 for enhanced and \$52 for non-enhanced).**

Continue investments to reduce the wait list for both HCBS and ADHC:

- Currently there are over **26,000 individuals** who are on the wait list that need HCBS and/or ADHC services.
 - While some can bypass the waitlist by applying for Community Choice waiver, they don't meet the criteria of nursing home level of service. These Medicaid Participants remain on the waitlist for other HCBS.
- These services are a cost savings to the state and allow families to stay together in their preferred settings.

Addressing Impact of Proposed Licensure Regulations for Home Care Providers

In-Home Care Providers are currently engaging in the stakeholder process as DPH works to finalize proposed licensure regulations. We appreciate that DPH has re-initiated the comment process and fielded our concerns on a number of proposed regulations that would have an adverse impact on access to care, and we'd like the legislature to be aware of these potential challenges that would impact providers' ability to provide care:

- **Proposed Drug Testing Requirement:** A proposed regulation would require random drug testing be conducted **solely** by laboratories in accordance with the federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). This would result substantial additional cost on providers, and is not necessary when an adequate drug test can be obtained through other, less costly means.
- **Drug Testing Requirements Across Settings:** While we understand that drug testing requirements for caregivers is codified in statute, we are concerned about inconsistencies in requirements between home care and comparable levels of care in the state.
- **Proposed Health Assessment Requirement:** Given the ongoing workforce shortage and high turnover rate within our industry, requiring every potential hire to go to a "physicians or authorized healthcare providers" office on an annual basis will slow the hiring process and dramatically increase costs for providers, not to mention the additional demand this would place on physicians' already busy schedules.

Adult Day Health Centers

Adult Day Health Centers offer a program of individual and group activities and therapies for adults 18 years of age or older. The program provides community-based day care services for adults in need of a supportive setting, thereby preventing unnecessary institutionalization. Unfortunately, Medicaid reimbursement rates for this important program have stagnated. We would ask that these rates be increased to better serve the population that relies on these services.

Budget Requests

1. **Increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate for Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) and ADHC Nursing services:**
 - Increase ADHC rate from **\$75** per day to **\$80** per day
 - Increase ADHC Nursing Rate **\$15** per day to **\$20** per day

Regulatory Challenges

- DHHS currently requires that nursing orders must be updated every 90 days. This is overly burdensome for providers and can delay care for patients.
 - **Our recommendation** is modifying the current regulation to reflect that nursing orders are updated annually and as needed when orders change.
- Currently, DHHS requires that a registered nurse (RN) be on site at Adult Day Health Centers. This is overly burdensome and a strain on the nursing workforce.
 - **Our recommendation** is that a licensed practical nurse (LPN) be allowed to provide this important oversight work instead of a registered nurse (RN), while keeping a RN in a position of oversight for the center. Currently, an LPN has the ability to do all the same duties as a RN except assess.