



National Medicaid Action Council

228 Seventh Street, SE Washington, DC 20003
t: 202/547-7424 f: 202/547-7518

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ELLEN BOLCH
Co-Chairman

ANDREA L. DEVOTI
Co-Chairman

GALE BOHLING

ANGELA BUCHANAN

JEAN HUNHOFF

RICHARD MCMILLAN

TIMOTHY R. ROGERS

LYNDA TANNER

Governor Nimrata Randhawa Haley
Office of the Governor, State of South Carolina
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Christian L. Soura
Director
Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], State of South Carolina
P.O. Box 8206
Columbia, SC 29202

**Caring for Our Caregivers:
Supporting Nurses and Caregivers Who Support Individuals Covered
by Medicaid**

VAL J. HALAMANDARIS
Ex Officio

THOMAS MORELAND
Ex Officio

DENISE SCHRADER
Ex Officio

KAREN MARSHALL THOMPSON
Ex Officio

COLIN ROSKEY
Executive Director

CHRIS JENNINGS
Senior Policy Advisor

Dear Sir/Madam:

The National Medicaid Action Council ("Council") is the nation's largest organization of home and community based care providers dedicated to individuals and their families who rely on Medicaid to support their often complex in-home clinical and supportive care needs. Council members are passionate about preserving access to Medicaid home and community based services ("HCBS") and to Long Term Care Services and Supports (LTSS) programs, are committed to care quality and financial integrity, and stand ready to assist you in advancing efficient delivery models that protect access to care in the home, improve the lives of the caregivers themselves, and support long term program sustainability in your state.

The Council is an affiliate of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice ("NAHC"), a non-profit association representing 33,000 home care and hospice organizations nationwide. Both the Council and NAHC strongly advocate for the more than two million nurses, therapists, aides and other caregivers employed by such organizations who provide in-home services to some 12 million Americans each year who are infirm, chronically ill, and disabled.

As you know, nurses and other in home caregivers serve a critical role in keeping individuals and families together and healthy, and are essential assets in your state's efforts to manage complex clinical and economic conditions in communities. Nurses and in-home care givers work every day on the front lines of public health, striving to improve or maintain life quality, opportunity and social functioning in complex populations. Without such dedicated caregivers, safety net programs like Medicaid would struggle to meet their mission, and would face more costly alternatives like institutional care.

In recognition of the unique and central role nurses and caregivers play in keeping state Medicaid programs like yours efficient and accessible, the Council welcomes an opportunity to discuss policies and reform principles that our members believe can make Medicaid programs still stronger, even more efficient, and more accountable to taxpayers. Nurses and in-home caregivers are squarely in the center of each of our proposals. The Council stands ready to work with you and your designees to design and implement strategies that improve quality and enhance performance in HCBS and LTSS programs, while honoring the dignity and diligence of the nurses and in-home caregiver professionals responsible for it.

First, the Council believes that nurses, caregivers and personal care assistants deserve fair and equitable compensation for their efforts, which frequently extend to include "first responder" responsibilities, making their contributions even more essential. But because caregiver compensation is often tied to insufficient provider rates set for their services by Medicaid agencies or by managed care organizations, caregivers may take home less than they deserve. The Council is eager to work with you to explore **funding enhancement strategies that can secure a stronger economic foundation for nurses and caregivers**, recognizing that what our nurses and caregivers create in their work today can yield program savings tomorrow, in the form of hospitalizations prevented, and costly institutional care avoided.

Second, nurses and caregivers also manage medication, feeding, transferring, bathing and personal care – all with the compassion individuals deserve and with the efficiencies Medicaid programs depend on. **Each affirmative act that a nurse or caregiver takes to keep an individual stable, compliant, healthy, and away from higher cost care centers should be rewarded, with recognition in salary in benefits that reflect the critical contributions each makes.** The Council fundamentally supports pay-for-performance systems, and is eager to work with you to structure and implement program that measure our member's worth, clinically and economically, to both the consumer and to your state, especially if such systems can provide a pathway to stable compensation and benefits for nurses and caregivers.

Finally, the Council is prepared to work with you to design provider payment and delivery reforms that **put nurses and caregivers first**, and that establish a reasonable compensation structure for home care workers, via changes to provider payment systems and/or pay-for-performance regimes, as long as such change respects the uniqueness of the employment arrangement, where the consumer is the primary focus of responsibility and where the state bears financial responsibility, through itself or through a managed care partner.

The Council and our members in your state stand ready to join together on behalf of our nurses and caregivers to ensure that their individual economic foundation today and their future tomorrow is tied to a wage that accurately and fairly reflects the contributions they make every day toward improving lives, managing health, and keeping Medicaid system costs low.

We stand ready to work with you in all such initiatives to improve the lives of the workers your consumers and your Medicaid program officials depend on.

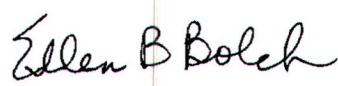
Very truly yours,



Colin Roskey



Andrea L. Devoti



Ellen B. Bolch