



Mass Home Care

Press Release: For Immediate Use

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Elder Home Care Wait Lists To Begin In 25 Days

STATEWIDE---The Baker Administration has officially announced that starting September 1st, waiting lists for some elders will begin in the home care program. Massachusetts calls itself a “community first” state---but the doors to nursing facilities are wide open, while the entrance to home care will soon be limited. Mass Home Care predicts that the monthly caseload for elders will have to drop by 650 to 800 elders per month.

“Due to projected demand exceeding FY17 budgetary limitations,” the Administration said in a memo to Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs), “Elder Affairs will be implementing a managed intake process. This process will be effective as of September 1, 2016.”

The final Conference Committee budget for FY 17 home care items is roughly \$3.5 million below FY 16 appropriations:

Line Item	FY16 GAA	FY 17 House	FY 17 Senate	FY 17 FINAL
9110-1500 ECOP	\$ 70,255,327	\$ 74,345,122	0	\$70,548,399
9110-1630 HCPOS	\$104,595,483	\$101,485,589	\$158,143,536	\$102,570,589
9110-1633 HC CM	\$35,546,961	\$ 33,795,743	\$ 52,557,919	\$33,795,743
TOTALS	\$210,397,771	\$209,626,454	\$210,701,455	\$206,914,731

The maintenance budget for the enhanced home care program is around \$74 million---so the total shortfall is closer to \$7.5 million. “This was an entirely predictable—and avoidable—outcome,” said Mass Home Care Executive Director Al Norman. “The General Court didn’t give home care enough funding to run a maintenance budget, and the Governor filed a supplemental budget that added more federal dollars---but reduced the state share, setting up a wait list situation.”

According to the Executive Office of Elders Affairs, elders who have “a critical unmet need for meal preparation” will be put on a waiting list---regardless of where they live in the state. Every elder who applies for home care is assigned a “priority level” based on their need for service.

The state is also cutting off funding for the Intensive Care Management program, which helps seniors with behavior health reasons for resisting care. A pilot program approved by the General Court to provide up to \$1 million to help seniors with income slightly over the home care eligibility limit has also been scrapped.

Mass Home Care has written an amendment to the Governor’s supplemental budget to add \$3 million in available federal dollars for home care from the “Community First” Trust Fund.

“This is a manufactured crisis,” Norman concluded. “The state has federal dollars in its hands that could end this wait list before it happens.”

“We hope they act quickly—on September 1st we start turning some elders away.”

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