

# Efforts and Progress in Implementing the Recommendations of the Commission to Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues

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# Overview

- The Commission to Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues was created by the Legislature and met in 2019, issuing its recommendations in January 2020.
- PL 2021, c.398, Section AAAA implements a rate recommendation from that report (to ensure that labor costs accounted for in MaineCare rates support at least 125 percent of minimum wage) and requires the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide annual reports each year from 2022 to 2026, regarding the Department's efforts and progress in implementing the recommendations of the Commission.
- The Department has compiled this first report in collaboration with its partners at the Maine Department of Labor and Maine Department of Education.

# Reimbursement

- In response to pandemic in 2020:
  - Rate increases for personal support specialists, attendant care services and related home-based services accelerated to April 1, 2020
  - Temporary rate increases to HCBS, residential care and nursing facility providers
- In August 2021:
  - Coronavirus Relief Funds awarded to nursing homes, Private Non-Medical Institutions Appendix C and Adult Family Care Homes
- In September 2021:
  - DHHS shared draft schedule for implementing rate investments associated with the first phase of the MaineCare Rate System Reform
  - The Mills Administration announced supplemental COVID payments for nursing facilities, residential care facilities, and adult family care homes to help address workforce issues by retaining current staff or hiring new vaccinated staff
- Effective retroactively to January 1, 2022:
  - Rate increases to ensure the labor component of rates for identified LTSS services are equal to at least 125% of minimum wage (Laws of Maine 2021, c. 398, Part AAAA )
  - Increased Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) to reflect higher than anticipated inflation and accelerated implementation
- In February 2022:
  - Supplemental payments to Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers for bonuses to direct support workers and supervisors (third and final approval from CMS received late January)
- Supplemental wage add-on (in addition to Part AAAA) proposed for Nursing Facilities and Private Non-Medical Institution Appendix C, subject to Legislative approval

# Workforce Recruitment and Retention

- Media campaigns
- Targeted health and LTSS job fairs
- Direct support worker discussion groups and advisory council (led by LTC Ombudsman)
- Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program (led by FAME)
- Bridge English as a second language (ESL) for non-English speaking Mainers to achieve credentials such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Personal Support Specialist (PSS) and others (with Dept of Education)
- University of Maine System coordinating opportunities for students to work while in college
- On-line [Recruitment and Retention Toolkit](#)

# Workforce Development

- Expansion of healthcare pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs
- Collaboration with the University of Maine System and Community College System to align learning standards with needed certifications
- Two full-time healthcare career navigator positions within local Career Centers to help individuals get connected to healthcare training and job opportunities

# Qualifications and Training

- In October 2021, on-line survey to assess current healthcare and training needs to key provider associations, including those representing hospitals, home health, behavioral health, outpatient services, dental services, LTSS, and skilled nursing facilities
- Coordinated approach to healthcare training opportunities and funding (with Department of Education, University of Maine System and Community College System)
- Worker Portability and Advancement initiative launched to create a base credential usable by individuals in at least two current roles, the Personal Support Specialist (PSS) and Direct Support Professional (DSP), with consideration also being given to Mental Health and Rehabilitation Technician I

# Expanding Natural Support Systems and Consumer Directed Services

- DHHS completed a MaineCare Section 19 waiver amendment to allow, in some circumstances, a spouse to be a paid caregiver
- As part of its response to COVID-19, DHHS added emergency provisions to its HCBS waiver programs to allow family members, spouses and guardians to be paid by agencies to provide services to their family members
- Self-direction has been extended on an emergency basis during the pandemic to participants of Section 18 (Brain Injury Waiver) and 20 (Other Related Conditions Waiver)
- DHHS has submitted a temporary modification to Section 29 services (Supportive Services for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities waiver) to add self-direction as a service delivery model for select services. This is an interim measure to expand self-direction while the model for intellectual disability is being refined. It was based on input from an OADS workgroup that built on earlier stakeholder work by the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

# Public Assistance

- ASPIRE pilot in which participants are screened for interest in healthcare programs and enrolled in the Healthcare Careers On-ramp Program
- Benefits Cliff Tool Pilot in mid-February (with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta)
- In 2020, the Department extended transitional MaineCare from 6 months to 12 months to individuals who lost MaineCare assistance due to earnings
- The Department's Office for Family Independence (OFI) hosts monthly community partners meetings with MaineCare providers, local advocacy groups, etc. as a forum to share information such as upcoming changes to public assistance rules or process or respond to inquiries



# Residential Care Capacity

	<b>Number of Licensed Facilities</b>	<b>Bed Capacity</b>
<b>Assisted Housing Facilities</b> (Residential Care, Private Non-Medical Institutions, Waiver Group Homes and Assisted Living)		
May 2020	852	10,800
January 2022	1,154	11,528
<b>Nursing Facilities</b>		
May 2020	93	6,506
January 2022	88	6,335

# Occupancy Rates for Selected Facility Types

Date	Occupancy
<b>Residential Care Facility Level IV</b>	
November 2020	82.88%
November 2021	84.66%
<b>Nursing Facility</b>	
November 2020	80.62%
November 2021	73.75%

# Home Care Members Served and Wait Lists, MaineCare

Date	Members Served	Wait List
<b>Section 12 Attendant Services</b>		
November 2020	374	0
November 2021	317	0
<b>Section 19 Waiver Older Adults/Physical Disability</b>		
November 2020	2,133	0
November 2021	2,233	0
<b>Section 96 Private Duty Nursing &amp; Personal Care</b>		
November 2020	2,672	0
November 2021	2,735	0

# Home Care Members Served and Wait Lists, OADS State Funded Services

Date	Members Served	Wait List
<b>Section 63 Home Based Care</b>		
November 2020	962	553
November 2021	677	996
<b>Section 69 Independent Support Services</b>		
November 2020	1,669	925
November 2021	1,518	1,425
<b>Chapter 11 Personal Assistance Services</b>		
November 2020	114	88
November 2021	94	121

# Discussion