

The Home Care Association of Washington (HCAW) has some exciting news to share with home health agencies in Washington state! As many of you know, serving the Medicaid population is complex and the patients needs often include issues related to housing, behavioral health, food security and more. Most home health agencies in our state have been paying for a Social Worker without state Medicaid reimbursement because it's the right thing to do for the patient. HCAW has been working with the state legislature for over three years to provide funding in the state budget to reimburse for a Social Worker for Medicaid Home Health. This year we were successful in gaining funding in the 2021-2023 State Operating Budget ([ESSB 5092](#), page 188)! The budget proviso below will provide ongoing funding that starts with the new budget cycle on **July 1, 2021**. Here is the language from the budget proviso:

(65) \$232,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022, \$300,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023, and \$599,000 of the general fund—federal appropriation are provided solely for reimbursement for a social worker as part of the medical assistance home health benefit.

This was a pleasant surprise since we started late in session to officially request funding this year based on a combination of new federal funding and improved revenues for the state. I testified before both the House Appropriations and the Senate Ways and Means committee requesting the funding for this year's budget in February. This funding is the culmination of many years of effort by HCAW members working closely with the Health Care Authority to create the [Home Health services to medical assistance clients](#) (November 30, 2019) Report to the Legislature, which recommended including a social worker. We also tried to include the social worker benefit with a rate increase for home health in a bill last session. The social worker request fell away, but we were successful getting the Home Health rate increase into last year's operating budget starting on January 1, 2021. We used the financial data from last session, which was already in the fiscal committee staff files, so it was ready to go this session on short notice!

Slowly but surely we are increasing reimbursement rates for Medicaid Home Health to be more fiscally sustainable. Reimbursement for a Social Worker will benefit our Medicaid patients and our home health agencies around the state.

Thank you to everyone who send in a message to their local legislators during this session to request the funding for a Social Worker for Medicaid Home Health...your letters made a difference!!

Sincerely,

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