



Representing not-for-profit providers of aging services, supports, health care and housing

LeadingAge Connecticut members help thousands of older adults every day by providing the aging services, supports, health care and housing that they need, when they need them, in the place they call home. Our member organizations cover the entire spectrum of aging services including Adult Day Services, Home Health Care, Senior Housing, Assisted Living, Residential Care Homes, Life Plan Communities, Chronic Disease Hospitals and Skilled Nursing Homes.

Advocacy Priorities for 2019

Transitioning Aging Services

Connecticut's goal is to rebalance our long-term services, supports and health care system so that more people can receive the services and care they need in community-based settings. LeadingAge Connecticut continues to support the rebalancing effort and is committed to working with the state to continue on this path. To accomplish successful rebalancing, the state must strengthen and invest in our entire system of long-term services, supports and health care by:

- *Establishing a collaborative effort to reduce the number of nursing home beds in service by 3,000 in the next two years to achieve the state's rightsizing goals and prepare for the new acuity rating system (see details on reverse side)*
- *Encouraging and enabling providers of aging services, supports, health care and housing to adjust, modernize and diversify their models of care to meet current and future consumer needs and expectations*
- *Supporting a collaborative and efficient regulatory and reimbursement environment that is adaptive and receptive to forward thinking ideas and solutions to rebalance the system*
- *Expand and strengthen affordable housing options for older adults*

Strengthening Medicaid Reimbursement

While appreciative of recent increases in the Medicaid rates of reimbursement for long term services and supports, prior years of neglect have left the rates woefully inadequate. We must continue to incrementally increase the reimbursement rates because quality services, supports and health care for aging adults cannot be sustained without rates of reimbursement that cover the cost of providing them. We urge the state to:

- *Increase the Medicaid rates of reimbursement for long-term service and supports (LTSS) to meet the cost of providing them*
- *Address the reimbursement rate needs of all providers of aging services, supports, and health care in a fair and judicious way*

Expanding Affordable Senior Housing with Services

Connecticut has very successful models of delivering Medicaid home care program services and supports to residents of affordable senior housing, allowing them to stay in their affordable apartments as they age. This includes our affordable assisted living sites. We urge the state to:

- *Continue to invest in the development, capital needs, and operations of affordable senior housing so as to expand the number of available housing units where needed aging services can be delivered*
- *Fully fund the rental subsidies for the residents of the four Assisted Living Demonstration Program sites as required to meet the state's contractual obligations (see details on reverse side)*

Nursing Home Rightsizing Plan

Goal of developing an aggressive, multi-pronged plan to encourage the reduction of 3,000 nursing home beds currently in service within a two-year period so as to prepare for a new acuity-based rate system and the consumer needs of the next decade.

Why 3,000? The *State of Connecticut Medicaid Long Term Care Demand Projections* contained in the 2012 Mercier Report estimate that our state will need 2,692 fewer beds by 2020. (Note: The Mercer projections are currently being updated. It should also be noted that Long-Term Care Planning Committee's Long-Term Services and Supports Plan predicts that we will be serving 4,655 fewer Medicaid clients in the nursing home by 2025.)

Why two years? Our goal is to reduce the number of nursing home beds to the most efficient and effective size before we implement the acuity-based rating system that is being developed by the state. We believe that having the right number of nursing home beds will increase the financial stability of the entire sector, give us the opportunity to utilize the nursing home funding available in the most effective manner, and open the potential for additional investment into the rightsized nursing home field to update and modernize the physical plants while also expanding higher acuity-based service programming.

Subsidized Assisted Living Demonstration (ALSA Demo) – Subsidy Program (CGS 17b-347e)

Issue of Concern: The Subsidy Program was underfunded by \$450,000 in FY 19 and while DOH was able to cover the shortfall this year, the future of the ALSA Demo is dependent on full funding

Summary of Program:

Rental Assistance grants are provided to owners/managers of the 226 units of newly developed affordable housing units constructed under the Assisted Living Demonstration program on behalf of low and very low-income elderly residents. That program provides subsidized assisted living services, as defined in section 19-13-D105 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies, for persons residing in affordable housing, as defined in section 8-39a of the general statutes. These four projects provide valuable service enhanced housing for frail elderly people.

Eligible Uses:

Grant subsidies are provided to offset the cost of rent at these facilities in order to ensure that sufficient funds are available to pay down the debt service on the original bonds used to finance the development of these facilities.

Program Benefits:

This program provides low and very low-income elderly residents with an affordable assisted living option, giving them access to the services that they require to live independently and prevents their premature placement in a nursing home or other higher level of care facility.

State's Obligation:

The State of Connecticut has a contractual obligation to fund the grant subsidies associated with this demonstration. The obligation is to CHFA and by extension the holders of the bonds used to raise the original capital to develop these four projects. Rental subsidies funded at the level calculated by CHFA are necessary for the State to meet its contractual obligations as it relates to the 226 units of state-funded assisted living units across Connecticut. These four facilities provide state-subsidized assisted living to 226 frail elderly, at a substantially reduced cost, when compared to traditional nursing homes. Without this funding, it could result in a default on our outstanding bond payments, and subsequent foreclosure of these facilities—ultimately leading to closure—and a substantially higher cost to the state for nursing home care.

Property Name/Location:

The Retreat, Hartford	100 units
Herbert T. Clark Assisted Living, Glastonbury	25 units
Luther Ridge Assisted Living, Middletown	45 units
Smithfield Gardens Assisted Living, Seymour	56 units