

March 7, 2017

To: Sen. Carolyn McGinn, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee
From: Allison Lemons, Sibling of an individual with I/DD

Re: Support SB 173

I support Senate Bill 173 which would increase reimbursement rates for HCBS services.

This directly affects the health of my brother, Charles, who has cerebral palsy and is on the I/DD waiver. Because of current low reimbursement rates, his group home has trouble maintaining staff levels. There is a slow but constant change in the staff that cares for his daily needs. A few years ago he was hospitalized for three weeks, at great cost to Medicaid, I'm sure, for constipation, an easily preventable problem. To prevent it, staff must keep track of his bowel movements and provide the appropriate medication when needed. This is clearly written down in his protocol, but new staff is busy learning so much about a number of people all with different problems, that it has been overlooked several times. Just this week, he had to return home from his day program because of constipation so severe it made him ill. Once the proper medication was given, he was fine.

In other words, it is hard to get good staff, takes time to train them, and then hard to retain them at the current reimbursement levels, which are so low that clients' health can be endangered.

I urge the Senate Ways and Means Committee to make increasing the reimbursement rates for HCBS services a priority.

Sincerely,
Allison Lemons
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