



TESTIMONY

Submitted by Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO
The Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home

Black and Puerto Rican Caucus Hearing
March 10, 2025

CARE AT HOME SUSTAINABILITY AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

Representative Antonio Felipe, Representative Derell Wilson and distinguished members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, my name is Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO of the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home. Our Association is the united voice for our licensed Home Health and Hospice agencies and many Homemaker-Companion Agencies. Together, our members provide services that foster cost-effective home care for Connecticut's residents in the setting they prefer most – their own homes.

I'm here before you this evening to address the **Rationale for Strengthening the Paid Direct Care at Home Workforce** because the caregiving industry is in crisis and we need to prepare for America's rapidly aging population.

Here's a picture of the current direct care at home workforce using data from PHI's [2022 and 2023 Connecticut Direct Home Care Workforce characteristics](#). Of note, PHI is the nation's leading authority on the direct care workforce. Data below does not include the "gray market" (caregivers hired outside our agency-based providers or CT's SEIU self-directed care).

- Care at Home Direct Care Workers totaled 42,280 Home Health Aide/Personal Care Aides (2023)
 - However, another striking number to report from 2022-2023 is that there are 118,400 direct care worker job openings!
- Of those working:
 - 88% are women (2022)
 - 67% are people of color (2022)

In addition, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), between 2019 and 2029 the demand for home health and personal care aides is expected to grow by 33.7 percent!



Another direct care workforce study completed in 2022-2023 by MissionCare ([The State of the Direct Care Workforce](#)) offers the following national data:

- Direct care workers are 7x more likely to live in the poorest income category vs the average US population
- 63% have a net worth of <\$25K
- 61% have no discretionary income
- 54% rely on public assistance

The data speaks for itself...**we don't have enough direct care workers to fill the current need which is growing exponentially every year, AND they are not paid a livable wage!**

Given that 67% of this workforce are people of color, I'm sure the BPRC Caucus would agree that a focus on increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for agency providers will, in turn, be invested in a stronger, better paid agency-based workforce.

Our request is to 1) increase Medicaid rates for home health providers by 10% this year, with subsequent 10% increases over each of the next four years and 2) increase Medicaid rates for homemaker-companion providers by 13% this year and next then a 10% increase over each of the following 3 years.

Last year, the Governor ratified a contract giving the self-directed SEIU PCAs a 26% wage increase over the next two years, a much-needed increase. Unfortunately, the agency-based home care providers received no such increase hence the 13% request...we need to invest in the entire direct care workforce (both agency-based and self-directed) to ensure a future workforce that can support the needs of our growing aging and disabled population in Connecticut.

Thank you,

Tracy Wodatch

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