Dear Members of the FY19 Budget Conference Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the nearly 200 members of the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts and requesting that the Conference Committee support Senate Section 119, which authorizes an Employer Medical Assistance Contribution (EMAC) Hardship Exemption.

This section requires the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to develop and approve a hardship waiver for employers experiencing a financial hardship due to their EMAC contribution liability under the new assessment which was established in the FY 2018 state budget. The provision directs DUA to identify and give special consideration for businesses providing services that serve the public interest.

Since taking effect January 1, 2018, this assessment has had a severe impact on employers specializing in Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). These employers provide essential services to the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable citizens under programs in the Executive Office of Health and Human Services or those paying privately to age in place. Transitioning care to lower-cost settings is essential to curbing rising health care costs. However, many of these employers are dependent on state funding to serve consumers in these programs. Since State reimbursement rates haven’t been increased in 10 years in some cases, many employers are struggling to offer wages able to support employer-sponsored health coverage. This tax is making it difficult for employers of this nature to continue meeting the service demands of those in need.

If you have any questions regarding our request, do not hesitate to reach out to me at pkelleher@thinkhomecare.org or Jake Krilovich at jkrilovich@thinkhomecare.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Pat Kelleher
Executive Director
Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts