Memo on ASAP Initiative to Increase In-Home Services Rate by 10% in Response to COVID19

Since the onset of the COVID19 State Emergency, Mass Home Care (MHC) has worked to coordinate a streamlined response throughout the ASAP network. The goal of these efforts is to ensure that our members, and our partner provider agencies, can continue to provide essential home care services to consumers throughout our communities. The guiding principles that serve as the foundation of our work during these challenging times are twofold:

1. Ensure that older adults and individuals in need can continue to receive necessary direct care services in their homes provided by a skilled and trained workforce who follow all established safety guidelines and protocols
2. Advocate for the frontline workforce of our network, including meal delivery staff and volunteers, Protective Services workers, and home care workers employed by our partner agencies, with the necessary protection and support they need to continue to provide daily care including Personal Protective Equipment and training, priority testing for COVID, and appropriate pay for their work.

As outlined in a memo issued by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) to their contract agencies on April 22, 2020, several local, state, and federal organizations have implemented relief measures related to COVID19. Some of these initiatives, which flow directly through the ASAPs, are designed to extend relief to the home care provider agencies that contract with the ASAPs to provide direct care services to clients at the local level.

MHC, and our ASAP network, recognizes the new market pressures our in-home care service providers face as they continue to provide essential services throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. In response to this recognition and to align with COVID relief initiatives throughout the EOHHS portfolio, the ASAPs will implement a temporary 10% rate adjustment to the following in-home care services rates: Homemaker, Personal Care Homemaker, Chore, Companion, and Supportive Home Care Aide.

This temporary rate adjustment will be 10% of the established negotiated rate between an ASAP and each of their provider agencies that were in place as of March 1, 2020. This temporary rate adjustment will begin for services delivered from April 1, 2020, through July 31, 2020.

This initiative aligns with recent Supplemental Payment Methodology Applicable During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency released by MassHealth including:

- Administrative Bulletin 20-24 101 CMR 350.00: Home Health Services – April 16, 2020
- Administrative Bulletin 20-35 101 CMR 359.00: Rates for Home and Community Based Services – April 23, 2020
- Administrative Bulletin 20-25 101 CMR 309.00: Rate for Certain Services for the Personal Care Attendant Program – April 16, 2020
- MassHealth Managed Care Entity Bulletin 23 – April 2020

This temporary rate adjustment is necessary to ensure the reliability of services for consumers under ASAP case management. To support our guiding principles outlined above, the ASAPs expect that provider agencies will utilize the additional temporary reimbursement rate allocations to support costs resulting from the public health emergency, including costs incurred that are reasonably necessary to promote the health and welfare of ASAP consumers and the direct care workers providing services. ASAPs will continue to carefully monitor the economic condition of the service delivery network to ensure consumers have access to high-quality services.