



Responses to Public Comments: Attachment 4.19-B OHIC Rate Updates

Public Comment Period: July 31, 2024 – August 30, 2024

Category	Nature of the Comments	EOHHS' Response
<p>Elimination of Enhancements</p> <p>9 responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EOHHS eliminated enhanced reimbursements for home care agencies which were used to pass through to CNAs and homemakers to increase wages. Members of the industry feel blindsided by this and state there was no communication that would lead them to think the enhancements would be eliminated. EOHHS did not discuss the removal with RI Partnership for Home Care prior to the elimination of enhancements. State that the cut will reduce wages by \$4 per hour, a reduction of 25%. Without the enhancements, agencies are unable to focus on providing higher standards of care and cannot invest in day-to-day operations. 	<p>The updated rates for home care had the enhancements built into the rate. The language for certain enhancements in the State Plan was eliminated to reflect the updated methodology, which accounts for the enhancements in the base rate.</p> <p>Page 26 of the final OHIC Report, published September 1, 2023 states: “The specification of the IRM accounts for these Personal Care Enhancements in the recommended rate.”</p> <p>The SFY25 State Budget directs EOHHS to implement the OHIC recommended rate, meaning that EOHHS lacks discretion to revert to the previous structure under which the enhancements are add-ons to a base rate rather than built into the base rate. However, note that EOHHS determined that to comply with RIGL 40-8.9-9(g)(2), which requires payment of an enhanced rate for services delivered by a direct care worker who had undergone behavioral health training to be passed through to the direct care worker, EOHHS must retain the BH Training enhancement on top of the new rate, even though the new rate already accounts for this enhancement.</p> <p>Because the new rate model incorporates the enhanced reimbursements, and in light of the maintenance of the BH Training enhancement on top of the new, higher rates, providers are expected to receive higher reimbursement than they do today, not lower. Home care agencies will still be required to pass through to direct care workers the BH Training enhancement and a portion of the shift differential, and in light of the overall rate increase, EOHHS is not aware of any factor related to the rate changes that could lead to wage reductions for direct care workers.</p>
<p>Pediatric Home Health Rates</p> <p>2 responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T1000, T1000 TE were included in OHIC rate review for \$87 per hour for RN and \$63.68 for LPN but it still leaves Rhode Island behind Massachusetts since they increased their rates on August 1st. There is not a different rate for pediatric services provided by RNs or LPNs for pediatric private duty nursing. 	<p>Private duty nursing is authorized by Rhode Island’s 1115 Demonstration Waiver, not the Medicaid State Plan. Because private duty nursing is not a State Plan service, private duty nursing rates are not included in the State Plan, and changes to those rates are not effectuated through a State Plan Amendment. EOHHS is in communication with CMS regarding updates to rates for Demonstration Waiver services.</p>
<p>Skilled Care Rates</p> <p>1 response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T-1001 and X-0043 are inadequate based on time in the home, delivery of skilled care services and treatment and competitive market pay rates. Using the current appropriation within the SFY25 Budget, requests adjustment to X-0043 to reflect current market and add a modifier for skilled care beneficiaries. 	<p>The rates for these codes are included in the final OHIC Report on page 26 and Appendix 1 page 4. The SFY25 State Budget directs EOHHS to implement the OHIC Report recommendations as well as to specifically increase code X-0043 by thirty percent (30%). Accordingly, the rate for X-0043 will be \$152.49. EOHHS does not have the discretion or authority to implement a different rate for these codes.</p>