



HCBS Home Health Worker Supports for PAUSE: Program Guidance

November 30, 2020

1 Executive Summary

One of the most effective methods of mitigating the risk of providing long term care to vulnerable populations in congregate settings is to keep them in their homes as long as possible. Rhode Island provides home-based care options for individuals in need of long term care that reduce their exposure to the pandemic risk by keeping them out of congregate care settings. Although long term care services provided at home also pose a risk of infection, the risk is considerably lower than in nursing facilities and generally easier to control.

A second order effect of this pandemic is the increased need to provide long term care services in the home as an alternative to congregate care settings. To address these second order effects of the pandemic, the State is establishing a support program for direct care staff, to include Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) and homemakers who work at home health agencies¹ providing services to Medicaid beneficiaries. The goal of this grant is to increase support for the low-income, direct care workforce that provide home-based long term care services as an alternative to higher risk congregate care settings to mitigate potential exposure to COVID-19 during the pandemic.

As we have seen increases in COVID throughout Rhode Island, these workers must take additional precautions to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their clients from COVID-19. We recognize that for many home care workers, the ability to self-isolate is difficult without additional support. Further, we believe that workers who are caring for this population deserve the incentive to stay at work amidst the increase in cases. We want to provide additional support to home care workers and their employers that creates the appropriate incentive to stay healthy and stay at work to care for others.

2 Program Description

2.1 Program Summary

The **HCBS: Home Health Worker Supports Program for PAUSE** is established to increase the capacity and immediate availability of home health services and to give agencies the flexibility to determine appropriate payroll supports required to sustain delivery of safe, at home health care. These funds are an additional measure to be used as secondary to other federal COVID-19 relief funding received by home health workers, and other funding resources made available by the State over the duration of the COVID-19 response.

This Program will distribute up to \$1 million in funding to Home Health agencies to be used for supplemental payroll support to Certified Nursing Assistants and homemakers for taking on the risk of entering people's homes during the public health emergency.

¹ For the purposes of this guidance, "Home Health Agencies" refers to both Home Care Providers and Home Nursing Care Providers licensed by the RI Department of Health."



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Eligible uses of funds include but are not limited to:

- Temporary raises to compensate workers for the added hazards of working during the pause
- Recruitment or retention payroll support
- Funds may also be used to cover any increased payroll taxes or UI or similar contributions that are a function of the increase in the payroll amount

Funds should not be used to backfill or supplant existing wage support programs, but rather to expand them. Increased payroll support must be based on a baseline average of wages paid to the individual employee or class of employees as of October 2020. It is the state's intention that this funding be used to increase current rates of pay or provide other financial support beyond what a home care agency is currently doing. Payroll support should be used for workers who are directly working in people's homes, not workers conducting telework or on vacation.

The state will allocate to each eligible agency a percentage of up to \$1 million in funding in direct proportion to the agency's share of the monthly billed hours² for **non-skilled** services to the Medicaid and/ or Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) @Home Cost Share program. For purposes of establishing funding amounts, the share of billed hours for each agency is calculated as the maximum hours billed per month during the months of July – September 2020 as listed in Attachment A.

Allocated funding is expected to equal \$4 per monthly billed hour of certified nursing assistant and homemaker hours by agency. Depending on the volume of applications for this program, these amounts per monthly billed hour may be higher.

Funds will be distributed to Applicants in a lump sum upon receipt of a completed subaward agreement. The agencies will be responsible for distributing funds to direct care workers. All funds must go directly to direct care workers or the direct costs incurred for payment of payroll supports (i.e. insurance, payroll taxes).

2.2 Funding and Application Dates

Key dates for the **HCBS: Home Health Worker Supports** Program are as follows:

- **December 1, 2020:** Applications available online at EOHHS website.
- **December 7, 2020 at noon:** Applications due to the State.
- **December 2020:** Funds disbursed to agencies

2.3 Eligible Applicants

Funding through this Program is restricted to Home Health Agencies who are licensed to provide services to Medicaid beneficiaries in the state of Rhode Island and have served Medicaid or Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) @Home Cost-Share recipients in calendar year 2020. All eligible agencies are listed in Attachment A.

² Including hours for both managed care and FFS clients.



2.4 Program Application Requirements

In order to receive funding through this Program, eligible agencies must submit a completed application to EOHHS via email on or before the due date listed above. The application includes the following requirements:

1. Signed commitment to implement the payments in accordance with the Program guidelines, including tracking how the program funding was spent.. Recipients should be able to show the State how funding was used, to whom payroll supports were allotted, and how much was received.
2. Signed agreement to the agency’s maximum monthly billed hours during July – September 2020 for non-skilled services to the Medicaid and/or OHA@Home Cost Share Program as determined by the State and as contained in Attachment A.
3. Signed commitment to retain funds in a separate account for payments related to this Program and to provide progress reports as required by the State.

Applicants must agree and commit to all elements listed above in order to be eligible to receive this funding.

All questions regarding this Program should be directed to: OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov with “Home Health Worker Supports” in the subject line.

2.5 Eligible Uses of Funds and Reporting Requirements

Funds received through this Program must be for supplemental payroll supports as described in this guidance.

Applicants will be required to report to EOHHS at the end of the grant period on the distribution of funds and their methods of tracking payments. Applicants will have until December 30, 2020 to distribute funds to direct care workers and document how funds have been distributed. If funds are not distributed to direct care workers for work performed by December 30, 2020, any unexpended funds must be returned to the State. For providers who issue payroll checks to workers in arrears, checks may be issued to workers in January 2021 as long as the hours covered by that payroll check were worked prior to December 30, 2020.

Once funds are disbursed, successful Applicant award recipients are instructed to keep detailed and complete financial records demonstrating that funds received through this Program are spent in accordance with these requirements, as award recipients of these funds will be subject to audit. In the event of an audit, if the award recipient is found to have used funds for ineligible expenses, the award recipient will be considered in violation of the award agreement at which point RI EOHHS may begin the process of recouping all or a portion of the funds awarded. The State will determine whether the full award or a portion of the award shall be recouped based on the State’s assessment of the unique circumstances of each violation of the award agreement.

3 In Closing

The COVID-19 public health emergency represents a clear hardship for the State’s LTSS system that requires broad cooperation to overcome; it is also clear that the public health emergency shall continue to present challenges as it evolves. This Program represents an opportunity to extend that cooperation to build strong



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resilience for the current crises and improve health outcomes for all Rhode Islanders in need of long term services and supports.

The State of Rhode Island looks forward to working with critically important home health workers and stakeholders to establish and carry out this program of support.



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Attachment A – Potential Eligible Support Funding Amounts
Maximum Monthly Licensed Nursing Assistant and Homemaker Medicaid Billed Hours –
July to September 2020 for S5125 and S5130

NPI	NPI & Agency Name	Maximum Monthly Hours Billed Between July and Sept 2020
1326250572	1326250572 A CARING EXPERIENCE NURSING SERVICES INC	33,867
1609955822	1609955822 HOPE NURSING HOME CARE LLC	29,344
1710058904	1710058904 NURSING PLACEMENT INC	24,649
1184073058	1184073058 ELMWOOD HOME CARE INC	18,454
1912172974	1912172974 INDEPENDENCE HEALTHSERVICES LLC	17,546
1053433730	1053433730 HAIGH VENTURES INC	12,585
1023148004	1023148004 LIFETIME FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INC	10,662
1912946898	1912946898 BAYADA HOME HEALTH CARE INC	10,078
1578843264	1578843264 COMFORT HOME CARE SERVICES (COMFORT LLC)	9,555
1609994763	1609994763 OCEAN STATE NURSING SERVICES INC	8,978
1104948439	1104948439 HOME CARE ADVANTAGE INC	7,152
1205053048	1205053048 MORNING STAR HOMECARE LLC	7,080
1134119381	1134119381 H & T MEDICALS INC	6,772
1235777228	1235777228 YOUR CHOICE OF HOME CARE LLC	6,374
1427531359	1427531359 JOY HOME CARE INC	6,057
1881069607	1881069607 OCEAN STATE HOME HEALTH CARE INC	4,239
1720237167	1720237167 MAS HOME CARE	4,222
1073837050	1073837050 THE SUMMIT MANAGEMENT GROUP LLC	3,548
1558877951	1558877951 RAISING HOPE INC	2,958
1003472747	1003472747 CAREGIVERS RI LLC	2,694
1326145699	1326145699 PHENIX HOME CARE	2,502
1073558680	1073558680 SPECIALTY PERSONNEL SERVICES INC (CT)	2,337
1649300526	1649300526 SPECIALTY PERSONNEL SERVICES INC	2,188
1306947833	1306947833 COWESETT HOME CARE INC	2,136
1538216635	1538216635 HEALTHCARE CONNECTIONS NURSING SERVICES	1,863
1528526001	1528526001 STAFF SOLUTIONS INC	1,847
1205842036	1205842036 HOME CARE SERVICES OF RI INC	1,777
1225434608	1225434608 ONE SOLUTION HOME CARE	1,552
1649382151	1649382151 MAXIM HEALTHCARE SERVICES INC	1,534
1366838500	1366838500 NASH CORP	1,338
1184743965	1184743965 COMMUNITY CARE NURSES INC	1,284
1598898108	1598898108 ACCESS HEALTHCARE INC	1,263
1821325366	1821325366 DEPENDABLE HEALTHCARE SERVICE LLC	1,092
1053807743	1053807743 HOME CARE NETWORKS LLC	1,081
1427155613	1427155613 COVENTRY HOME CARE INC	1,078
1316125453	1316125453 SENIOR HELPERS	1,039
1831196955	1831196955 ASSISTED DAILY LIVING INC	961
1265883318	1265883318 CASA CURA INC	615
1124595806	1124595806 CARE AT HOME LLC	370
1225029770	1225029770 CONCORD HEALTH SERVICES INC	354
1326139023	1326139023 CAPITOL HOME CARE NETWORK INC	267
1043454663	1043454663 CEDAR HOME HEALTH LLC	185