

National
MLTSS
Health Plan Association

July 19, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman, US Senate Committee on Budget
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Investment in HCBS Infrastructure

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Chairman Sanders, and Senator Warner,

The National MLTSS Health Plan Association¹ commends you for your efforts in developing legislation that will have a lasting effect on our nation's infrastructure, particularly as it pertains to the delivery of Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical need to invest in our country's HCBS infrastructure and the importance of developing a robust direct care workforce. This need extends well beyond the current pandemic and is responsive to the ever-increasing burdens placed on Americans tasked with providing care to an aging population as well as to the millions of individuals with disabilities. **As MLTSS health plans that serve the most vulnerable of these Americans, we urge you to commit to investing the full \$400 billion to expand and strengthen HCBS, enabling individuals with long-term services and supports (LTSS) needs to live in the setting of their choice, including their own home.**

A full investment in HCBS infrastructure will ensure the proper development of these essential areas:

1. Supporting family caregivers who serve as the backbone of the HCBS system;
2. Increasing the sustainability and long-term availability of the direct care workforce;
3. Providing states with the funding and support they need to innovate in the delivery of HCBS; and
4. Creating incentives for HCBS providers.

Additionally, any efforts to strengthen HCBS should work in complement and parallel with efforts to advance the integration of Medicare and Medicaid for dually eligible beneficiaries. Approximately 75 percent of Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS) users are dually eligible for Medicare and

¹ The MLTSS Association represents health plans that contract with states to provide long-term services and supports (LTSS) to beneficiaries through the Medicaid program. Our members cover the majority of enrollees in MLTSS plans and assist states with delivering high-quality LTSS at the same or lower cost as the fee-for-service system with a focus on ensuring beneficiaries' quality of life and ability to live as independently as possible. Member organizations include Aetna Inc., AmeriHealth Caritas, Anthem, Centene Corp., Commonwealth Care Alliance, Inclusa Inc., L.A. Care Health Plan, Lakeland Care, Molina Healthcare, UPMC Health Plan and VNSNY CHOICE.

Medicaid, while only 10 percent are enrolled in programs that integrate care. There is limited coordination, communication, and data sharing between the two programs, resulting in fragmented, uncoordinated care for the vast majority of LTSS beneficiaries. As Congress seeks to expand access to HCBS, it is important to advance the aligned goals of rebalancing and integration in tandem to achieve truly person-centered care.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to addressing the crisis that COVID-19 presents to all Americans. We stand prepared to work with you and your staff – including providing detailed policy options – to ensure the individuals we serve receive the best support possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time with questions or for further information at mkaschak@mltss.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Kaschak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Mary Kaschak
Executive Director