



*****ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT*****

SUPPORT MI CHOICE WAIVER FUNDING INCREASES IN THE FY 2020 STATE BUDGET

September 16, 2019

Background

The State of Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) FY 2020 budget is currently in a legislative conference committee to resolve differences between the State House and State Senate passed bills. MI Choice Waiver program funding is part the DHHS budget¹. Conference committee action has been scheduled for this week.

MI Choice Waiver is a Medicaid funded program that empowers older adults and adults with a disability to continue living independently in the community they call home. Currently, more than 15,000 participants receive services in their home at less than half the cost of what those same services would cost if delivered in a publicly funded long term care option like a nursing facility. This not only allows people to live in their own homes, but saves Medicaid dollars!

The State House DHHS budget bill (HB 4235 H-3) provides a 5% funding increase for the MI Choice Waiver program, amounting to \$392,449,400 in total funding for fiscal year 2020. The State Senate DHHS budget bill actually cuts the MI Choice Waiver budget below FY 2019 levels.

There are more than 3,000 older adults and adults with disability waiting for an assessment to determine eligibility for the MI Choice Waiver program. The 5% increase in the State House budget bill would serve up to 1,000 individuals from the waitlist and increase the capitated rates to adjust for rising costs of care.

Per the House Fiscal Agency, the 5% increase is realized by adding \$14.6 million in state General Funds, which leverages more than \$25 million in additional federal resources for the program. The additional state funds would be "offset with assumed long-term care savings". This is possible because the MI Choice Waiver program can serve Medicaid recipients requiring a Nursing Facility Level of Care in the community at less than half of what it would cost to serve the same individual in an institutional setting. It allows participant choice, high quality-high satisfaction care, and produces significant long-term care savings.

¹ <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2019-2020/billanalysis/House/pdf/2019-HLA-4235-D4F6D7E8.pdf> (Pg. 13, #87)



How to Take Action

Call or write your State Representatives and State Senators, ask them to support the 5% increase for the MI Choice Waiver program in the State House passed DHHS budget (HB 4235 (H-3)) for FY 2020. Even if you know your request is not an easy one, please do this outreach anyway. It is important that advocates continue to build awareness about MI Choice.

It's critical that all members of the state legislature understand how important the MI Choice Waiver program is to older adults and caregivers! A brief and quick message indicating your support can be very effective.

Contact Information for our state legislators can be found at:

<http://www.house.mi.gov/MHRPublic/frmFindARep.aspx>

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/fysbyaddress.html>

For more information contact Jason Maciejewski at The Senior Alliance: jmaciejewski@thesenioralliance.org or 734-727-2058

Sample Longform E-mail or Letter Text

State Representative _____,

As Conference Committees are meeting this week, I am writing to you about increased funding for the MI Choice Waiver program. I urge you to support the State House Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) budget bill (HB 4235 (H-3)), which provides an increase of \$40.5 million in FY 2020 for MI Choice Medicaid Waiver¹.

There are more than 3,000 older adults and adults with disability waiting for an assessment to determine eligibility for the MI-Choice Waiver Program. This increase would serve up to 1,000 individuals from that waitlist and allow for up to a 5% increase to the capitated rates to adjust for rising costs of care.

Per the House Fiscal Agency, this \$14.6 million General Fund investment is "offset with assumed long-term care savings"¹ and would bring more than \$25 million in federal



resources to the Michigan. This is possible because the MI Choice Waiver program can serve Medicaid recipients requiring a Nursing Facility Level of Care in the community at less than half of what it would cost to serve the same individual in an institutional setting. It allows participant choice, high quality-high satisfaction care, and produces significant long-term care savings.

I understand there are a lot of difficult choices to be made in the budget process this year and appreciate your support of the MI Choice Waiver program during the FY 2020 Appropriations process. I ask for your continued support of the \$14.6 million MI Choice Waiver increase (5%) as the budget proceeds through conference committee.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME and FULL MAILING ADDRESS]

¹ <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2019-2020/billanalysis/House/pdf/2019-HLA-4235-D4F6D7E8.pdf> (Pg. 13, #87)