



May 19, 2022

Honorable Karen Spilka, President of the Senate
Office of the Senate President
State House, Room 332
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Honorable Michael Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Ways and Means Committee
State House, Room 212
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear President Spilka, Chair Rodrigues and Members of the Senate:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Council for Adult Foster Care, Mass Home Care, the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers and The Arc, which collectively represent the vast majority of Adult Foster Care providers as well as the thousands of individuals receiving Adult Foster Care (“AFC”) services and their caregivers, we write to respectfully urge the Senate to consider the following budget request.

**FY2023 State Budget
Senate Amendment Support Request
To Ensure the Sustainability of Services to Older Adults and People with Disabilities
Served Through the Medicaid Adult Foster Care Program**

BUDGET REQUEST

- Preserve the current Medicaid rates for Adult Foster Care (AFC), continuing the temporary emergency adjustment provided through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to ensure funding for staff-related costs and live-in caregivers.
Support Senate Amendment # 490, sponsored by Senator Lovely. *(The amendment continues funding for AFC and Day Habilitation.)*

WHAT IS AFC?

- AFC is a Medicaid benefit that supports more than 13,000 older adults and adults with disabilities across the Commonwealth and their live-in caregivers. Live-in caregivers receive ongoing education and support from nursing and care management staff (employed by provider agencies) and a modest financial stipend.
- AFC is a crucial element of the Commonwealth’s Community First strategy, enabling older adults and adults with disabilities to live at home rather than in institutional settings that are significantly more expensive and restrictive.

IMMEDIATE NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

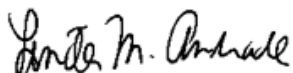
Preserve AFC Rates Currently In Effect

- AFC received very limited relief from MassHealth during the Covid 19 public health emergency. In July 2021, MassHealth provided the first relief in the form of a temporary rate increase, but this rate increase will be reversed, and ***AFC rates will be decreased by 10% on July 1, 2022.***
- The temporary rate increase has allowed AFC providers to offer recruitment and retention incentives and implement strategies necessary in the current constrained hiring environment.
- Maintaining AFC rates at the current levels will allow AFC providers to compete for, hire, and retain qualified staff who are crucial to ensuring the quality of care in AFC.
- Maintaining AFC rates at the current levels will also allow providers to increase financial stipends to live-caregivers who are accountable for care around-the-clock. They are critical resources in our strained human services workforce. ***Stipends have remained the same since before 2017 due to the fact that MassHealth has not permanently increased AFC rates in this period.***

On behalf of the 13,000 families receiving support through AFC, thank you for your support of the AFC program, individuals who need care at home and their caregivers, and the direct care workforce.

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, thank you for considering AFC as an approach to achieving savings in the MassHealth program and supporting this language. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions at all.

Sincerely,



Linda M. Andrade, President
Massachusetts Council for Adult Foster Care



Leo V. Sarkissian, Executive Director
The Arc of Massachusetts



Ellen Attaliades, President & CEO
Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP)



Michael Banville, Executive Director
Mass Home Care