



Talking Points

1. **Medicaid Waiver, Private Duty Nursing and Home Health Services Rates:** There isn't a set process or methodology established for an annual, or frequent, review of reimbursement rates for Medicaid waiver, private duty nursing and home health services to reflect actual costs of service and care delivery. The Nebraska Home Care Association will have members testify at the Appropriations Committee's budget hearing and share stories about how home care services have helped constituents remain safe, comfortable and independent at home and how it provides long-term cost savings to the state. **Please give your senator a one-page concise document that demonstrates how reimbursement rates for your agency or company are, in some cases, lower than your actual cost for services.**

The association is also considering requesting a study through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to determine actual costs of services compared to the current Medicaid reimbursement rates. We're also discussing a Performance Improvement Project (PIP) to study increasing access to private duty nursing for medically complex patients.

2. **Medicaid Expansion:** You may be asked how Medicaid expansion that was approved by a voter ballot initiative will impact your agency or company. It's unknown at this point what the increase in Nebraskans that are eligible for and require home care services will look like. You may want to again discuss the current reimbursement rates for Medicaid waiver and home health services and compare that with the costs of delivering those services. Also discuss the challenges in taking on additional Medicaid eligible patients, given the increased administrative burden with the Heritage Health Program.
3. **Heritage Health:** Share your agency or company's overall experiences with authorizations and claims, net loss per claim as a result of the additional staff follow-up time to file appeals and/or ensure reimbursement, examples of denials that shouldn't have been issued by the MCOs, and any reduction in services to Medicaid clients.
4. **Paid Vacation and Sick Time for Family Caregivers**
Background information: We anticipate that Senator Sue Crawford will introduce legislation that would support paid family leave and paid sick leave. She's interested in gaining insight into the daily struggles that home care providers see with patients and those providing care to them. In 2018 Senator Crawford introduced LB 844, which would require employers with four or more employees to provide employees with access to paid sick and safe leave. Employees would be able to accrue a minimum of one hour of paid sick and safe time for every thirty hours worked. Employers would be required to allow employees to accrue up to forty hours in a calendar year based on hours worked. Nothing in the bill prohibits employers from providing additional paid leave. Any employer with a paid leave policy who makes available an amount of paid leave which is sufficient to meet the accrual requirements for

paid sick and safe time and which may be used for the same purposes as paid sick and safe time under the Healthy and Safe Families and Workplaces Act would not be required to provide additional paid sick and safe time.

Suggested talking points: From an employer perspective, many home health agencies and home care companies are small businesses. If they had to increase the amount of paid time off for employees, they would be forced to increase their rates for private duty/companionship services or reduce home health services because fewer providers would be available. If agencies and companies don't offer this benefit, it puts them at risk of losing employees who aren't guaranteed a job. There are already statewide shortages of nurses and aides.

5. Public Health Dental Hygienist Services in the Home

Background information: The Nebraska Public Health Dental Hygienists Association is planning to introduce legislation that would allow them to provide preventative and palliative dental care treatment for patients in their homes. They would be able to bill the patient or responsible party directly, or bill Medicaid if the client is a Medicaid beneficiary. They would be able to provide services to self-pay and other payor sources, except Medicare because it's not a covered benefit.

Suggested talking points: Home care providers support access to services in the home for patients that are fragile, vulnerable or have difficulty with leaving their home or having access to transportation. Dental care is preventative treatment that helps prevent other health issues from arising, thus reducing costs for other healthcare services.

Other discussion points to make:

- Explain the differences between home care and home health to newer senators.
- Emphasize what you do and your extensive training to provide highly skilled, quality care to patients with a variety of healthcare needs including those with complex, long-term care. Explain why it's important to protect our scope of practice.
- Talk about that home health agencies, hospice providers and home care companies help Nebraskans save a significant amount of money by preventing emergency room stays and re-hospitalization.
- Home care is the most economical healthcare choice. Share examples of services your agency provides, including telehealth if applicable.
- We reduce long-term care costs through our expertise, and keep people in the safety and comfort of their home where they want to be. We help constituents have improved quality of life and increased independence.
- Share examples of how your agency has helped patients' in the senator's legislative district to improve their health and quality of life.