



October 16, 2009

Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, Secretary
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Secretary Bigby:

The Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts is among many groups concerned about the possible impact of declining state revenues on the tens of thousands of patients receiving home health services across the state.

As the administration works to implement its plan to address a \$600 million shortfall, we offer our assistance as an organization and an industry, but also strongly urge you to recognize that home health care cannot sustain any further cuts. The cost-effectiveness of home health care has been well-documented during the past year and proves the industry's value.

For instance, a study by the national research firm Avalere Health (May 11, 2009) found that home health use saves Medicare dollars by reducing hospitalizations and nursing home stays. Based on their findings, an estimated \$30 billion could be saved nationally over the next ten years by expanding access to home health for chronic disease patients. Another study by the New England Healthcare Institute (August 11, 2009) touts health care "teams," including home health workers, as a way to improve medication adherence, which costs the country \$290 billion in avoidable expenses every year.

Moreover, a survey of Massachusetts physicians conducted last year was also recently released. Here are some of their findings: **97%** say the services help them better manage their patients' care at home; **89%** believe they reduce inpatient hospital admissions without compromising quality of care or health care outcomes; **78%** reported better patient compliance with care plans; **78%** believe telemonitoring services and remote monitoring of vital signs can improve quality of care; **67%** believe home health services can reduce patient cost.

As you know, effective December 1st, 2008, the 20 percent rate reduction on nursing services went into effect. MassHealth also placed a freeze on home health rates of payment, which remain at their 2007 level since no home health rate increases were provided with the economic circumstance existent here and nationally. With all this in mind, we, again, urge you to recognize that home health could not survive any further reductions.

The Home Care Alliance is, as always, willing and able to work with the administration to find cost-effective solutions as Massachusetts addresses its fiscal health, and we look forward to presenting our services as a solution to our collective challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Kelleher', with a long, sweeping underline.

Patricia Kelleher
Executive Director
Home Care Alliance of MA