

National
MLTSS
Health Plan Association

July 2, 2019

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Chuck Schumer
United States Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Chuck Grassley
Senate Finance Committee
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Ron Wyden
Senate Finance Committee
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Grassley, and Ranking Member Wyden:

We write to you today to offer our full support of the Empowering Beneficiaries, Ensuring Access, and Strengthening Accountability Act of 2019 (H.R. 3253) and to urge its swift passage in the Senate. This key piece of legislation would, among other provisions, provide funding for the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program through 2024 while extending protections against spousal impoverishment for individuals who receive home- and community-based services (HCBS) through 2024. Both of these provisions would help maintain and build upon the progress the long-term care community has made in the effort to rebalance long-term services and supports (LTSS) away from institutional settings of care towards HCBS. As an association of the nation's leading managed long-term services and supports (MLTSS) plans, our members can attest to the positive impact the MFP program has had in the lives of their beneficiaries.

The National MLTSS Health Plan Association is an association of health plans that contract with states to provide managed long-term services and supports (MLTSS). Our members currently cover the large majority of all enrollees in MLTSS plans and assist States in delivering high quality long-term care services 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 in the community instead of an institution. In the case of MFP, states have relied on our members to coordinate the transition process for beneficiaries, provide support and follow-up services post-transition to ensure beneficiaries are not readmitted to an institution, and identify and refer beneficiaries eligible for services.

As you are aware, the purpose of MFP is to provide funding and support for states to transition individuals living in institutional care settings into settings that are more integrated with their community. In addition, the program aims to encourage states to create policies to allow funding for LTSS to "follow the person" across their preferred care setting. Since the beginning of the program's operations in 2007, MFP has

helped transition over 63,000 individuals from institutional settings of care back into their homes and communities. Unfortunately, funding for the MFP demonstration is set to expire within the coming months.

A number of evaluations of the MFP program have proven it successful in not only preventing beneficiaries from being readmitted to an institutional care setting, but achieving beneficiary satisfaction and achieving savings for states. In evaluations by Mathematica, MFP participants reported improvements in all measured quality of life domains one year after transitioning out of an institutional care setting. Beneficiaries reported a similar amount of satisfaction two years after their transition. MFP participants are also likely to remain in community settings, as the Kaiser Family Foundation found only eight percent of all participants returned to an institution. This success and beneficiary satisfaction culminates in achieving savings for states: MFP transitions made through 2013 have generated health care cost savings of “\$204 to \$978 million depending on the number of transitions that can be attributed to the MFP demonstration.”

As key partners with states and providers, MLTSS plans have coordinated the transition process for beneficiaries, provided support and follow-up services post-transition to ensure beneficiaries are not readmitted to an institution, and identified and referred beneficiaries eligible for services under MFP. For example, Texas’s STAR+PLUS program assigns the responsibility of providing the large majority of MFP services to MLTSS plans, including identifying appropriate housing for an individual, facilitating the transition process itself, and checking in with the individual after their transition. MLTSS plans have also partnered with organizations already providing deinstitutionalization and transition services, such as Centers for Independent Living (CILs), to accomplish MFP objectives.

We would like to commend the Senate’s commitment to rebalancing LTSS thus far through the passage of the Medicaid Extenders Act of 2019 (PL 116-3) earlier this year. To build upon the temporary extensions of MFP and the impoverishment protections, we believe the Senate should quickly move to pass H.R. 3253 and send the bill to the President for his signature. Funding the MFP program and extending protections against spousal impoverishment for those who receive HCBS will help continue stakeholder efforts in rebalancing LTSS towards the home and community, enable individuals to live in the setting of their choice, and achieve cost-efficiencies for the Medicaid program.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the bill or how we can be of help in your efforts at your convenience. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at latkins@mltss.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Lawrence Atkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "A".

G. Lawrence Atkins
Executive Director