



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR

Remote Hearing on Essential Worker Relief Package

Int. 1918-2020 - Premiums for Essential Workers

Remote Testimony Provided by Alyssa Lovelace, Director for Policy & Advocacy
Home Care Association of New York State
May 5, 2020

Good afternoon. I'm Alyssa Lovelace, director of public policy and advocacy with the Home Care Assoc. of New York State. Thank you Chair Miller and Committee Members for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on Int. 1918-202.

HCA represents nearly 400 providers, organizations and individuals statewide, including home care agencies, hospices and managed long term care (MLTC) plans that provide care to NY's most vulnerable populations in their homes. Many of these providers and plans are located in the NYC region.

HCA most certainly believes essential workers should be granted premium pay during this crisis; however, this pay should be reimburseable to the plans and providers who pay the workers. As written, this legislation would create yet another unfunded mandate placed on the shoulders of providers and MLTC plans. Providers and plans must already comply with state and federal wage mandates. For example, in NYC, this includes minimum wage and wage parity requirements that must be passed through to workers.

Home health aides, nurses, and all professional and paraprofessional staff working in home care, hospice and managed long term care have been on the front lines of COVID-19 just like those working in hospitals and other care settings.

However, New York City's home care agencies, hospices and MLTCs that employ and pay these workers are already facing major financial shortfalls addressing the innumerable daily factors involved in providing care in the COVID- 19 pandemic, including the exorbitant costs of personal protective equipment, which is still in great unmet need for home care and hospice in NYC, worker illness, and other severe abnormalities in operations and service delivery patterns resulting from COVID. Additionally, providers and managed long term care plans are facing steep rate reductions due to the recently enacted state budget and reductions in Medicaid funding.

Rather than impose another wage mandate on these health care providers, HCA is requesting that the Council adopt a resolution urging state and federal partners to supplement funding for the purpose of premium pay. Let's secure funding first and then create a policy to address premium pay.

Well before this legislation was introduced, HCA and HCA provider members have independently raised the idea of enhanced funding for home care agencies, hospices and managed long term care plans compensation for all frontline workers battling COVID-19.

HCA has asked the state Department of Health, state Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to consider funding increases for home care, hospice and MLTCs for worker compensation, and most recently affirmed the same enhanced funding echo the Governor's call for enhanced pay for these workers.

So moving forward, HCA is happy to work with the City Council and state and federal partners to secure funding first for the purpose of premium pay and we're here as a resource as it relates to home care, hospice and managed long term care plans. Thank you.