

Home and Community-Based Care

Community Based Options are Where Older Adults Want to Age

A majority of older adults want to age in their homes and communities, supported by friends, family, and familiarity. For older adults in rural areas, their options for support are services in their homes or moving miles away from relatives to more intensive levels of care. Medicaid and the Older Americans Act are the primary payers for long-term services and supports delivered in community settings.

Only a small sliver of older adults with savings can purchase services privately or have invested in long-term care insurance. Neither Medicare nor private health insurance provide meaningful coverage for long-term services and supports.

Recent changes to Medicaid financing from the Working Families Tax Cut Act (HR 1; also referred to as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act) are imposing significant budgetary burdens on states. Historically when states are faced with budget shortfalls, they look to optional services like Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) to save money by cutting rates or capping services or slots.

Home and community-based care is becoming increasingly unaffordable. Policies are needed across all payers, the tax system, and through holistic long-term care financing to ensure access to robust home and community-based care.

Support HCBS Access, Sustainability, and Affordability

- Ensure the affordability of HCBS by opposing efforts to cut services, benefits, and rates and considering additional programmatic investments to ensure stability of home and community-based options.
- Support program integrity reforms that would invest in and strengthen existing oversight and enforcement measures that provide targeted and evidence-based accountability for bad actors. Broad attacks on the entire HCBS program because of the criminal activities of a few or painting all waste and abuse as criminal fraud jeopardize services for millions of our most vulnerable citizens, including older adults.

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- Enact legislation similar to the *HCBS Access Act* (S 762 / HR 1493 from the last Congress), which would revise Medicaid to put HCBS (including waiver, state plan services, and PACE) on equal footing with nursing homes, making HCBS a mandatory Medicaid benefit.

- Enact the *Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act* (S 2120), which would expand access to community-based services like adult day and respite care, and OAA-funded home care services and ensure adequate fiscal year 2027 appropriations for these vital programs.
- Ensure access to adult day services in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) by ensuring VA staff are well-educated on the availability of adult day and advocate for timely payment and network inclusion.
- Expand the Medicare Home Health Benefit to support ongoing and increased access to personal care and allow Medicare home health services to be delivered in adult day centers.

PACE

- Enact legislation similar to the *PACE Anytime Act* (S 4781 from the last Congress), which would allow PACE beneficiaries to enroll in PACE at any time during a month.
- Enact legislation similar to the *PACE Expanded Act* (HR 6590 from the last Congress), which would remove administrative barriers to PACE enrollment and expansion, allow access to PACE for new populations, and examine how to better integrate PACE in rural and underserved areas.
- Enact legislation similar to the *PACE Part D Choice Act* (HR 3549 from the last Congress), which would allow Medicare-only PACE participants to choose either a PACE-sponsored or standalone Part D plan, depending on what is in the best interests of the individual's financial position.

Long-term Care Financing and Tax Supports

- Enact the *Well-Being Insurance for Seniors to be at Home (WISH) Act* (HR 2082), which would enable sustainable long-term care financing and expand access to services in the home and community.
- Enact the *Credit for Caring Act* (S 925 / HR 2036), which would create a new tax credit for up to \$5,000 for working family caregivers.
- Enact the *Lowering Costs for Caregivers* (S 1565 / HR 138), which would allow the use of health savings and similar accounts to be used for expenses for parents.

Workforce

- Enact the *Fair Wages for Home Care Workers Act* (S 4081 / HR 7917), which would guarantee minimum wage and overtime protections for home care workers.