

My name is Emily Trager, I am an Age Well Case Manager, and a staunch advocate for dignified aging. Though my role was designed to coordinate care for older adults who wish to remain at home, I have found that a lack of available services, resources, and funding, combined with an ever-growing need, has made it almost impossible to serve as intended. The impact is determinantal. The most basic to the most complex needs of our clients are not getting met, and I fear it is because we do not value the work of our caregivers. Not only are our elders and caregivers suffering, but our entire system of long-term care is in jeopardy and at risk of failure due to underfunding. I would like to believe that our legislature values this work and this population enough to affect necessary change.

I am writing to support the Long-Term Care Crisis Coalition's request to:

- fully implement the increases for home-based Choices for Care services and Enhanced Residential Care (ERC) described in the February 15, 2023 DVHA rate study (approximately \$14.3 million total, \$6.3 million General Fund); and
- apply an adjustment to long-term care reimbursement rates in the SFY25 budget that includes an inflation factor that is reasonable and adequately reflects economic conditions, and accounts for changing market pressures, elevated staffing costs from Vermont's workforce crisis, and increases in costs of care.
- review and update rates on an annual basis to reflect the actual cost of care.

Thank you for your consideration and your care.

Emily Trager, MSW