

## **AgingCT Legislative Priorities SFY 2023**

*(Formerly the CT Association of Agencies on Aging)*

### **Increase the Medicaid Waiver asset limit to \$10,000 and the Medicaid income limit to 138% of federal poverty level**

An increase to \$10,000/single and \$15,000/couple in allowable **assets** would align eligibility with MedConnect. This proposed increase would allow residents to strategically plan for financial emergencies, including home repairs, car repairs, rent increases and other emergencies while qualifying for long-term and other medical care services in the community. An **income** limit of 138% of FPL aligns with the expansion of Obamacare, an expansion of which Connecticut was the earliest of adopters. This increase would eliminate the penalty of the extraordinarily low (\$1,062/month) income limit and replace it with \$1,563. All qualifying Connecticut residents at 138% of poverty would have equal access to critical medical and long-term care benefits. Utilized primarily by older adults and individuals with disabilities, this lack of alignment between HUSKY C and HUSKY D creates an unnecessarily complicated application and eligibility filing and significant gaps in coverage.

### **Fund a robust network of Medicaid Providers for CT Home Care Programs**

Fair and equitable reimbursement must be established for Medicaid Providers. An annual review and potential increase based on the cost of living should be considered. Ignoring the agency-based Providers while increasing wages for independent hires and nursing home staff creates a tiered system of access that is in direct opposition to the state's objective of rebalancing the Medicaid system toward home and community services and away from the more-expensive skilled nursing facility care.

### **Fund long-term care access for all Connecticut's residents, especially those in underserved communities**

The staggering growth in the age cohort 60 and older as well as 85 and older demands additional support for application and enrollment services in long-term care services and supports. A 2022 survey of older adults and caregivers confirms that nearly 50% of residents are unsure of where to go to get long-term care supports and services. Support funding for service navigators within the Agencies on Aging.

### **Other issues identified**

- Housing & Utilities – the cost of housing and energy are the top two (89% and 85%) economic issues for low-, moderate- and middle-income adults according to the 2022 Area Agency on Aging (AAA) survey of older adults called, *The Great AAAsk*. Scarcity of housing and affordability of housing are equally problematic. In most areas, the Public Housing Authority’s Maximum Allowable Rent (MAR) is far above the Medicaid income limit and represents more than half of the wages earned by minimum wage earners. **AgingCT supports all efforts to both expand the stock of affordable, accessible housing and to protect consumers from untenable rate increases and no-fault evictions.**
- Inflation is affecting food security. Informal surveys confirm many seniors are without enough food during the day. **AgingCT supports funding for food banks, congregate and home-delivered meals.**
- Transportation continues to be an issue despite free public transit. This is especially the case for rural residents and specialized medical transportation for older adults. **AgingCT supports low-cost, accessible transportation especially for individuals with special transportation needs.**