



Personal Assistance Services Funding

A 2.22% reduction to the personal assistance program is scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2013. This reduction stems from a proposal from the 2011 Legislature to reduce the amount of time PAS consumers have available to them for meal preparation to 4 hours per week (34 minutes per day or 11.5 minutes per meal). The reason this reduction does not take effect until July 1, 2013 is due to the budget deal reached between the Governor's office and Legislative leadership where this reduction was funded as one-time-only (OTO) and the funding, therefore, was set to expire at the end of FY2013.

During the 2003 legislative session, many services available under the personal assistance programs were reduced and have not ever been restored, much to the detriment of consumers' personal hygiene, health, and quality of life. Baths were limited to three per week. People are no longer allowed to bath daily unless they request a physician's prescription. This is just one example of the level of services currently available under the personal assistance programs, which force recipients to live in substandard conditions.

Cutting back further on the limited services available to citizens, who rely on personal assistance services as a means of basic survival, is a remarkably dangerous proposition for consumers. Especially considering that even now, there is rarely enough time available to them to have an adequate, let alone nutritious, meal prepared for them at least once per day and showers are limited to three per week.

Reducing the time consumers have available to them to prepare meals could have a profound effect on their health, leading to the malnourishment of many individuals who already experience at least one, if not multiple, health related issues. This could lead to even greater occurrences of emergency room visits and/or extended hospital stays to treat accelerated and more extreme ailments related to their primary diagnoses as well and an increase in the number of secondary health related conditions caused by malnourishment and unhealthy eating. Both of these scenarios would lead to an increase in the overall cost of care rather the desired decrease that is sought.

A further reduction in services could leave many individuals with no choice but to be forced into higher cost care settings to ensure their needs are met. Not only is this not ideal for or wanted by consumers but, it could ultimately cost the state more money in the long run than if consumers had adequate services available to them that would allow them to remain in a community setting.

This 2.22% funding reduction that goes into effect on July 1, 2013, should be reinstated to ensure all recipients of PAS services can continue to receive the current level of services that are now available so that they can continue to have access to nutritious meals and keep their health from deteriorating further as well as so other vital services within the program are not reduced or altogether eliminated.