

LEGISLATIVE

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Disaster Planning Equity

Submitted by: David Coffman – Thanks Mom and Dad Fund

The problem:

The Long Term Care Services & Supports (LTSS) system supports older adults through multiple programs and funding silos. In times of crisis, resources such as PPE are scarce. When limited resources are available a priority list is created. However, LTSS providers are not given priority. Home Health agencies are listed as tier 3 on the priority list. LTSS including Home Health providers must be acknowledged as a priority group in order to receive necessities and continue critical services during crises regardless of designations or funding silos. The recent pandemic demonstrates that in order for Georgia to continue its best efforts to flatten the curve of infections, the in-home service workers making face-to-face visits need protective equipment to prevent the spread of the outbreak.

What other states are doing:

The evolving pandemic has created similar problems across the country and there is an outcry from provider networks in Georgia alerting emergency managers to the gaps that have been exposed and are endangering older adult and in-home workers. Other states require home care providers to maintain disaster plans and the National Association for Home Care and Hospice has developed a resource for emergency planning. Florida has developed A Guide for Community Based Planning that explicitly mentions community-based services as a complex challenge for planning officials that necessitates a focus on the protection of elders who live in their homes and the community.

What this legislation would do:

Legislation could specifically name the Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) system providers for inclusion in all planning efforts and especially for Disaster/Pandemic planning. Thus, it can inform and authorize planners, disaster planners and plans to include the LTSS network in all planning efforts.

Any opposition:

All seniors should be treated as equal with the fullest dignity and respect in public policy. With varying needs being met by varying organizations, we must be mindful as to any misinterpretation of this effort.

Helpful Resources:

- 1 <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/home-community-support-services-agencies/hcssa-emergency-preparedness>
- 2 https://www.nahc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EP_Binder.pdf
- 3 http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/_documents/community-based-planning-guide.pdf