

For AL Providers

Tips for Working with Legislators

Communicating with Legislators

Here are some points you may want to consider as you prepare.

Provide a proper introduction including your background and role, and your experience with long term care issues. Establishing your credentials as a subject matter expert is essential to your work with legislators.

Know your numbers! Prepare a [facility profile](#) so you can easily provide specific details about your care center. Many people are impacted by your care, and those same people are impacted by legislative decisions and actions.

Be polite, be specific, and be brief! Your legislators are asked to make decisions about a myriad of issues during the legislative session. Typically, you'll have 15 minutes to make your case.

Follow-up is important. When you conclude your legislative meetings, ask if there is additional information you can provide, and then make sure to provide it! Follow up with a thank you note and continue to check in throughout the legislative session.



Key Messages: Assisted Living Facilities

Currently, we estimate that our Medicaid rate falls short by \$__ for every Medicaid resident in our communities. We cannot pass these costs on to private pay residents.

Long term care services for low-income Washingtonians who rely on the state Medicaid program are at tremendous risk.

The current assisted living Medicaid rates only cover 68 percent of the cost for care because the Legislature hasn't funded the payment system.

This means that the current Medicaid rates funding level only provides \$14.38 per hour for labor costs. This is a blended wage that includes nurses, direct caregivers, housekeepers, and others. This rate is lower than Washington State's minimum wage.

Low wages have made it difficult to attract new workers, and retirement, burnout, and stress are driving workers to exit the long term care sector in unprecedented numbers.

We are dealing with an unprecedented long term care workforce crisis that threatens access to critically necessary services to people who need care. Provide details about position vacancies and impact on care delivery.

The current funding shortfall is \$100 million annually according to DSHS.

It is imperative to improve Medicaid rates to ensure providers can compete for the workers who care for our aging and disabled.

We support the [DSHS recommendation](#) to fully fund direct care costs in assisted living. The cost to the state is \$96 million for the biennium.