

Q:

**Will a tight state budget leave out
homecare consumers and providers?**

A:

**Not if we have anything to say about it...
and we have a lot to say!**

Challenge:

We need to work hard to insure timely set up of the homecare commission. Even though voters approved the commission by an overwhelming 63% to 37%, we still need to implement the measure, lobbying state legislators at the capitol in Salem, and in our hometowns. The majority of the commission members will be current or former clients and we need to make sure that the clients appointed are strong advocates for client rights and quality of care as well as our rights as homecare workers.

Challenge:

The state legislature convenes on January 8. With an anticipated budget shortfall of 700 million, the challenge will be balancing the needs of seniors and people with disabilities with other important services like K-12 education. It will not be easy to preserve and improve homecare in the budget, which is why we need to make our voices heard. Proposals are already being put out that would impact the services we provide. One proposal would increase the impairment level needed to be eligible for services, with the expected outcome of 3,800 clients losing homecare services. Another proposal would eliminate Oregon Project Independence, eliminating services for 3,000 clients. We need to start now to make our case that services should be maintained and that wage and benefit issues should be addressed. Oregon voters overwhelmingly voted to improve homecare and we are committed to work with our partners and legislators to make sure we do exactly that.

- ◆ To give the best care we need to be able to care for ourselves, that means we need workers compensation and health insurance so that we can be healthy. That way we can give our clients the attention that they deserve.
- ◆ To attract and retain the best providers we need wages that are above the Federal and State poverty level. Low wages and no benefits don't just put the squeeze on us; they lead to high turnover that effects our clients.
- ◆ We need more training and screening so that the homecare system has the best providers and so we can keep learning to be better caregivers.
- ◆ The homecare program has already saved the state over half a billion dollars by keeping seniors and people with disabilities out of nursing homes or other residential care facilities. Not only does homecare save the state money, but more importantly it lets our clients live with dignity in their own homes. All that we are asking is that the state make a wise investment by adequately funding the homecare program.

Plan to meet your legislators on January 26 to talk about measure 99. Meet at SEIU Local 503 Headquarters at 12:30pm prior to lobbying activities at the Capitol. Your involvement is what will make the difference.

Join the union! Get Involved!

"I've been a homecare worker and now receive homecare services. The Homecare commission provides great opportunity to set a course that will help Oregon prepare for a future in which we invest in the care of our senior citizens and people with disabilities. I look forward to working to get the Homecare commission up and running, and am ready to meet those challenges and opportunities."

Kemberli Speight, Portland

