

Proposal 4 – Services Needed by People and Communities

Proposal 4, which appears on Michigan’s November 6 ballot, proposes to amend the state constitution to guarantee certain long-term care supports and services to elders and people with disabilities. PHI Michigan supports this proposal because it fosters dignity, respect, and independence—for all who receive in-home care and all who provide it.

Proposal 4 Establishes a Matching Services Registry

The amendment to the Constitution guarantees a set of services called a “matching services registry.” These publicly funded registries create a platform for matching individuals who need home care services with individuals who are qualified—and desire-- to provide those services. Fifteen states have statewide registries and regional registries operate in four others (see www.phinational.org/matching-registries).

Michigan established a matching services registry, the [Michigan Quality Community Care Council](#) (MQCCC) in 2005. In 2011, the Michigan Legislature defunded the MQCCC over concerns about unionization, but the registry still continues with a small staff, funded through donations. Supporters of the MQCCC, who believe the registry services are critical to elders and people with disabilities, launched a campaign this year to establish state support for the MQCCC through a constitutional amendment.

Registry Functions

Matching services registries exist to enable Medicaid beneficiaries with functional limitations to live in their own homes and control who comes into their homes to provide support services. The core function of all registry operations is to screen potential workers and share those results with Medicaid recipients looking for supports and services. To be listed on the registry, workers go through a screening process that usually includes reference checks, criminal background checks, and identification of preferred work days and times. With approval, the listed worker now has another tool to find employment as a home care aide.

Most of the state and regional registries, including the one defunded by the Michigan legislature, are designed to increase the ability of Medicaid recipients to directly hire home care staff rather than using a home care agency. Putting the control and responsibility of selecting a home care worker in the hands of the person receiving services is key to self-determination or self-direction.

In Michigan, over 80,000 Medicaid beneficiaries—elders, people living with disabilities, and people with intellectual or developmental disabilities--use the self-determination option in Medicaid's Home Help personal care program and the MI Choice home and community-based waiver program and other waivers serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The majority of these Medicaid beneficiaries using self-direction hire family members or friends and neighbors to provide home care services.

But tens of thousands of Michiganders do not have family or friends to hire. With incomes less than \$5,000 a year—the income limit to receive Medicaid services--Home Help beneficiaries must go into the open labor market to find, recruit, screen, interview, and hire a home care worker.

To locate a home care worker, elders and people living with disabilities use online bulletin boards, post leaflets, or turn to a wide range of community, human services, or faith-based organizations. None of these organizations are designed to help these Medicaid beneficiaries find qualified home care workers.

Proposal 4 designs an agency to deliver the services and supports needed by tens of thousands of elders, people living with disabilities, and people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who hire and supervise their own home care aides – making self-determination a safer, easier option for people to use.

Those vital registry services and supports include:

- Recruiting people who want to be home care workers at the wage rates these Medicaid recipients can afford to pay
- Conducting criminal background checks
- Creating a listing of potential workers that includes data such as available days and hours of work; smoking preferences; past work experience; reference checks; special training;
- Responding to requests for worker referrals from Medicaid beneficiaries that focus on the individual needs of the beneficiaries—“I prefer a woman caregiver who is OK with small dogs, is a good Polish cook who knows how to find a bargain at the grocery store, and who has experience helping a person who had a stroke and does not move as fast as I want to.”
- Providing voluntary training for beneficiaries on how to be a better supervisor
- Providing training for workers to develop and hone skills such as caring for someone with dementia or lifting someone without hurting your back.

Right to Unionize

Finally, the proposed constitutional amendment gives these workers the **opportunity to decide through a publicly conducted election if they want to be represented by a union or not** – an opportunity that would not be available without the employment relationships created by the proposal. There is no part of the proposal requiring a union to represent these workers. We support the right of all workers to decide whether or not to be in a union; it is always their decision.

It is important to the elders and people living with disabilities that the constitutional provision has specific guarantees:

- The decision to use any of the free registry services is the Medicaid beneficiary's decision.
- The decision to hire and fire any home worker is the Medicaid beneficiary's decision whether or not a union is created by the workers.
- The workers do not have the right to strike.

MQCCC implemented the best practices of matching services registries from across the country—face to face interviews with worker applicants, reference checks, criminal background checks, peer mentors for both Medicaid beneficiaries on how to be “a boss” and for home care workers for assistance in how to be a better aide, training opportunities for both Medicaid beneficiaries and workers. Funds were cut off for reasons that had nothing to do with the quality of the services provided.

Proposal 4 will constitutionally guarantee that elders and people with disabilities receive the services and supports they need to direct their own services and live independently in their communities.

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