

Background

The Aging Waiver is a Utah Medicaid Waiver program. In order to qualify a beneficiary must 1) meet the traditional Medicaid eligibility based on age and income and 2) require a nursing facility level of care, as determined by a Registered Nurse. The waiver has limited funding and can only serve as many people as the appropriated funding will cover. Currently, there are roughly 100 seniors on the waiting list who are eligible to enter a skilled nursing facility today at Medicaid's expense (average \$65,000/year) but who would prefer to live relatively independently in their homes at 1/6 of the cost to Medicaid (Current cost per Aging Waiver client is \$9,866/year).

The Aging Waiver accepts clients with the greatest needs first which tend to be the most costly, so those who remain on the waiting list are the best prospects to keep in their home with some home health services rather than having them move into a skilled nursing facility. Keep in mind that to even qualify for the Aging Waiver, you must require a nursing facility level of care so all of these people have high needs, but those on the waiting list are the best candidates to receive home and community based services at a much lower cost. The Aging Waiver has had relatively flat funding for at least five years despite the growing aging population. The current appropriation of state funds is \$1,691,300.

Itemized Budget

With an additional \$200,000 appropriation, 2/3 of the most at-risk on the waiting list could receive services at home, avoiding costly institutionalization. If those 2/3 choose to live in a skilled nursing facility (which they could do at any time), the cost to the state would be roughly \$1.3 million. These funds would be used to provide the following services as needed to Utahns currently waiting to receive benefits from the waiver:

- Adult Companion Services
- Adult Day Health Services
- Case Management
- Chore Services
- Community Transition Services
- Emergency Response Systems
- Environmental Accessibility Adaptations
- Fiscal Management Services
- Home Delivered Supplemental Meals
- Homemaker Services
- Medication Reminder Systems
- Non-medical Transportation
- Personal Attendant Program Training
- Personal Attendant Services
- Personal Budget Assistance
- Respite Care Services (May Be Provided in Long Term Care Settings)
- Specialized Medical Equipment
- Supportive Maintenance Home Health Aide

Performance Measure

The Medicaid Aging Waiver has a current performance measure to keep the cost per client at 15% or less of nursing home cost. In FY 2014, the waiver had a cost per client of 14% of nursing home cost. The impact of additional funding would help keep the cost per client below 15%.

