



News release

For more information, please contact:

Lisa Brandt, Director of Public Relations and Marketing Services

Mary Lanning Healthcare | 715 N. St. Joseph Ave. | Hastings, NE 68901

402-461-5105 | lbrandt@marylanning.org

MLH Home Care Services Director testifies before Senate Finance Committee

HASTINGS — The Mary Lanning Healthcare Home Care Services Director recently testified in Washington, D.C., concerning the effects of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) home health payment cuts.

Carrie Edwards was among those discussing the struggles caused by the cuts during the Senate Finance Committee's Subcommittee on Healthcare hearing regarding aging in place and access to home health care in the United States.

Others testifying at the hearing included William A. Dombi, National Association of Home Care & Hospice President; Judith Stein, Center for Medicare Advocacy Executive Director; and David Grabowski, Harvard Medical School professor and researcher.

According to an article in Home Health Care News, Edwards shared that MLH Home Care Services is a hospital-based, non-profit provider with a wide array of home-based care services. In March, MLH was forced to reduce its service area from a 60-mile to a 40-mile radius due to the CMS cuts. In May, it reduced to covering just a 25-mile radius, leaving some counties without coverage from another provider, Edwards said. This year, MLH had to decline half of its referrals.

"Our average daily census count reduced by more than 60% since the implementation of the new payment model, from an average of 88 patients in 2022 to a census count in September 2023 of 32," Edwards said. "CMS' actions are also having a direct impact on our ability to retain our existing workforce. We've had three registered nurses resign due to fear that the looming payment cuts being proposed by CMS will force our closure."

She added that MLH Home Care Services has a five-star patient satisfaction score and has prevented over 93% of patients from being readmitted to the hospital, which is better than average on both the state and national level.

"We're doing everything possible to remain operational," Edwards said. "There are agencies throughout Nebraska and the country that are at serious risk of closure. If I can leave the committee with one takeaway from my testimony today, it's that CMS and policymakers should be finding every way possible to make increased investments in Medicare home health services, instead of the current path of year-after-year payment cuts that are jeopardizing our program's ability to care for Medicare beneficiaries."

For more on this story, please see homehealthcarenews.com/2023/09/lawmakers-back-home-health-providers-condemn-payment-cuts-in-symbolic-subcommittee-hearing/ or www.mcknightshomecare.com/senators-side-with-home-health-field-about-access-issues-problems-related-to-funding-cuts/