

**CALL TO ACTION FOR MCAFC MEMBERS**  
**Support FY20 House Budget Amendment #651 to Support the Future of AFC**

Background: As an AFC Provider, you are well aware that MassHealth cut Adult Foster Care Program rates significantly in FY17 while simultaneously implementing new regulations that require AFC program accreditation. The combination of these changes has stressed the Mass. Council for Adult Foster Care members and AFC programs across the Commonwealth. Our caregivers and members are depending upon us, as AFC providers, to be the backbone of support and stability. Together, we can work together – with our legislators – to ensure that the AFC program and its providers are stable and supported with sufficient rates.

It is now Massachusetts' state budget season and we have worked with House Vice Chairwoman Tricia Farley-Bouvier (Jt. Committee on Elder Affairs) to file Amendment #651 to the FY20 House budget. Amendment #651 will require MassHealth to meet with stakeholders to develop a strategy and timeline for the implementation of reimbursement rates for adult foster care services that recognize the provision of quality services and the costs associated with operating accredited organizations. The plan will need to be completed by January 1, 2020 and presented to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, respectively. This is the first step to securing future rate relief for the many AFC programs that have been adversely impacted by the changes of last year. That said, we need your help to make this effort a successful one.

To that end, we are asking that you take action by contacting your state Representative and asking them to support and co-sponsor Amendment #651. Every call makes a difference. Please share this message with your colleagues and ask them to take action as well. Do not wait to make your calls; please call before 4/22 to make the request for support detailed below. Our goal is to get as many Representatives to support Rep. Farley-Bouvier's AFC Amendment (#651) as possible. This will boost our chances of ultimate success in the FY20 budget.

*PLEASE TAKE ACTION IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:*

**Step 1: Determine who your state Representative is.**

Look up your state Representative at <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>. You will enter your home address to see which Representative covers your home district. The State House Office contact number will be listed when you click on the Representative's profile.

**Step 2: Make the call.**

Call your Representative's State House Office as soon as possible, but *before* 4/22. You may refer to the proposed script to help guide your conversation and "ask" as outlined in Step 3, below.

**Step 3: Make the "ask" - Proposed script for your call.**

Introduction & getting the right person on the phone. When calling, first introduce yourself as a constituent who lives in the Representative's district. Next, ask to speak with the staff person who is handling budget matters for the Representative. Example:

"Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I live in the Representative's district. I am calling to provide information about a budget amendment I would like for Representative \_\_\_\_\_ to support and co-sponsor. Could I please speak with the staff person who is handling budget matters for the Representative?"

Explain why you are calling and make the "ask". Once on the phone with the right staff person (or when leaving a voicemail for that staff person) explain that you are calling as a member of the Mass. Council for Adult Foster Care and as an Adult Foster Care Provider to ask for the Representative's

support and co-sponsorship for Amendment #651, which will help set the foundation for the future of the AFC Program. (NOTE: see the attached fact sheet for more information about the amendment and issue.)

*Sample Script for Making the Ask:*

“I am calling you today on behalf of the Mass. Council for Adult Foster Care and as a concerned Adult Foster Care Provider.”

“As you may know, MassHealth substantially cut the Adult Foster Care rates to levels lower than rates in effect over 10 years ago. At the same time, MassHealth implemented new accreditation requirements that will result in significant new costs for AFC providers this year.”

“The rate cuts have forced many AFC providers to eliminate nursing and care manager positions, which have increased caseloads and decreased available support for families.”

“At a time when innovative home care models should be supported, rather than cut, we are asking for your help – on behalf of the 12,000+ families served by AFC in Massachusetts.”

“Representative Farley-Bouvier has filed Amendment #651 to the House FY20 budget to require MassHealth to meet with stakeholders to develop a plan for making sure reimbursement rates reflect quality services and the heightened program requirements. The future sustainability of the AFC Program depends on setting the right reimbursement rates.”

“I am calling to bring this issue to your attention and ask if the Representative will support and co-sponsor Amendment #651. Will he/she do so?”

Close the conversation and establish a way to follow up. The staff person is likely to say they will relay the request to the Representative. If so, ask the staff person their name so you can follow up. Provide them with your contact information and offer to answer questions or track down an answer, if they ask a question you are unsure of. Thank them for relaying your request, thank them for their time and thank them for anything they can do to support AFC through Amendment #651. Always be polite.

*Sample Script for Closing:*

“Thank you for relaying my request to the Representative and thank you for your time. Could I get your name so I can call back to follow up?”

“Also, please free to contact me if the Representative has any questions – I am happy to be a resource on AFC.”

“Thank you again for your time today and thank you for anything you can do to support AFC in the budget.”

- NOTE: The House begins debates on its budget on Monday, 4/22. Please make your calls this week to ensure that your request gets to your Representative *before* the budget debate is underway. The MCAFC will know whether the AFC Amendment is adopted at some point next week, after 4/22.