



NHPCO
National Hospice and Palliative
Care Organization



National Partnership for
Healthcare and
Hospice Innovation

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington DC 20220

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Secretary Yellen and Commissioner Rettig,

We write to you today on behalf of our members, particularly those who are providers caring for older adults and those with disabilities wherever they call home. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on these populations. All providers are experiencing a major workforce crisis and are struggling to attract and retain staff. A major component of their work, whether home health, hospice, or personal care services, involves staff driving to where people live in order to provide them with a range of clinical and supportive services. Staff members of these agencies may drive to as many as 5-6 homes per day, some of which are often tens of miles apart. The median wage for a home health or personal care assistant is \$29,430 dollars per year in 2021.¹ As of June 27th, the nationwide average cost of a gallon of regular gas is \$4.90, and in some areas the average price is over \$6.² The last Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) report showed the gasoline index rose 4.1% in May and has risen 48.7% over the past 12 months.³ Shouldering these rising gas costs is unsustainable for home-based care providers, including higher-paid clinical staff like nurses or physical therapists, let alone home health aides and personal care assistants.

We thank you for taking action to raise the standard mileage reimbursement rates midyear as a result of these historic gas costs. Unfortunately, for the members and staff described above and many others, the four-cent increase is not nearly sufficient. This increase will not make enough of a dent in the costs currently being borne by the staff of these providers that must travel every day to care for some of our country's most vulnerable individuals. Similar cost burdens have been imposed on others who provide essential services in additional aging services settings – such as nursing home and assisted living facility staff, or service coordinators at HUD-assisted affordable housing properties. The increased financial strain of rising gas prices is exacerbating the unprecedented workforce shortages these industries are currently experiencing, as the prospect of bearing the rising costs further discourages individuals from working in these fields. We ask that in these unprecedented times, you raise the standard mileage reimbursement at a rate that proportionately reflects gas price increases

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home-health-aides-and-personal-care-aides.htm>

² <https://gasprices.aaa.com/state-gas-price-averages/> access on June 27, 2022

³ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>



NHPCO

National Hospice and Palliative
Care Organization



*National Partnership for
Healthcare and
Hospice Innovation*

While we recognize no single action will alleviate issues that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, the workforce shortage, and the current gasoline price environment, this step would help our members and those they serve. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

LeadingAge

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation