



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

HOME CARE SERVICES

Issue and Position. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society believes it is important to expand public and private long-term care options. We especially endorse options that keep individuals at home or in the community as long as possible and functioning at the highest possible level.

Thus, we support:

- The \$31.8 million expansion of MI Choice, the Home and Community Based Waiver in the proposed DCH budget.
- Funding that improves the hourly wages of adult home help workers
- Revenue enhancements to create adequate funding for home care programs and services
- Long Term Care Connections, the Single Point of Entry pilot program
- Saving tax payer dollars by funding home care and chore workers

Background.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has long been concerned about the needs of people with multiple sclerosis for quality, accessible, affordable, and comprehensive long-term care services. Due to the chronic, often disabling nature of MS, approximately 20% to 25% of individuals with MS need long-term care services at some point during the course of their illness. This is approximately 3,500 people in Michigan. People with MS may require long-term care at a much younger age than the general population, but nursing homes often do not provide an environment where younger individuals can function at their highest level.

Michigan recently began taking small steps to reform its long-term care system to create a more efficient system which serves more people for the same amount of money. Reform is threatened by budget crisis discussions that use the term “optional” to describe home care based long term care.

The MI Choice home and community care waiver budget allocation has been reduced by over 30% in recent years. Additional funds would make it possible to serve some of the approximately 4,000 eligible individuals already on the statewide waiting list.