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Public Policy Memo

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Currently when determining if someone is eligible for in-home long term care services by Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA), a tool is used called the CARE assessment. In the assessment the person is asked questions regarding assistance they have received using a “look back period” of 7 days. The purpose is to pull data by reflecting on the assistance they have recently received to determine and show the assistance they need. There are a few big flaws in using a “look back period.” It is actually not an accurate way to reflect the assistance someone needs and often is unfair for those who currently don’t have anyone caring for them.

After the pandemic a huge caregiver shortage occurred which means that there are people who need assistance that are not receiving it simply because there are no caregivers available. If a person is barely getting by alone, the assessment would not reflect the assistance they need; it would reflect them being fairly independent due to their lack of assistance. It would not show how most days they can’t get out of bed, bath or feed themselves because they don’t have anyone there. Changing this policy would mean changing the assessment tool but it is necessary if we want to give people a fair and equitable way to be assessed.

With the elderly generation growing and our population getting larger and larger the need for support to keep elderly and disabled independent is higher than ever. We want to best support people in need and make sure they are getting the proper assistance they need. We can do this by properly reflecting the care someone needs in the assessment. It is imperative that we amend this policy and change the CARE tool.