



# FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contacts: Alison Yager, J.D. Florida Health Justice Project Executive Director; 646-322-8111, [yager@floridahealthjustice.org](mailto:yager@floridahealthjustice.org); Miriam Harmatz, Esq., Advocacy Director and Founder Florida Health Justice Project, (786)-853-9385, [harmatz@floridahealthjustice.org](mailto:harmatz@floridahealthjustice.org)

## **Florida Health Justice Project Urges Floridians Take Action To Increase Funding and Support for Home and Community-Based Health Care Services**

(Miami, Florida) – This week the US Senate Special Committee on Aging held a hearing in Washington, D.C. on "*An Economy That Cares: The Importance of Home-Based Services*", focusing on the *Better Care Better Jobs Act* to call attention to the severely underfunded Medicaid home-based health care (HCBS) program for seniors and the disabled.

While increased funding is needed nationwide, the need is particularly urgent in Florida, which ranks second for our rate of residents aged 65 and older, but 51st, behind every other state and D.C., on AARP's State Scorecard Summary of Long Term Services and Supports. There are more than 80,000 Floridians on waitlists for publicly-funded HCBS programs. Even after being accepted into the program, vulnerable Floridians struggle to secure the level of services they require.

At the hearing, Florida was represented by Florida Health Justice Project's client Alene Shaheed, a 67-year-old retiree who depends on home health care aides to stay independent, like many older and disabled Floridians.

"Why is this happening to me and so many thousands of others?" Alene asked at the congressional hearing. "These services are our lifeline to remain independent and live with dignity. They must be adequately funded."

Nationally, more than 3 million Americans are able to remain in their homes and stay active in their communities because of home-based care. There are hundreds of thousands more who would like to do the same but remain consigned to institutions or languishing on wait lists. Years of underfunding has created a critical shortage of home health aides, who remain underpaid and underappreciated.

FHJP urges all Floridians to support Alene by adding your voice to hers. Personalized messages can be sent to Florida Senators Rick [Scott](#) and Marco [Rubio](#). FHJP also has a direct link for [making comments](#).

Read Alene's story: <https://archive.floridahealthstories.org/alene-ltc-2>

Read the long-term care stories of real Floridians.  
<https://www.floridahealthstories.org/long-term-care>

ABOUT THE [FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT](#) The Florida Health Justice Project seeks to improve access to healthcare for Florida's most vulnerable and marginalized residents, and to promote health equity.