

JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

THE VAST MAJORITY OF OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WANT TO LIVE AT HOME.

Unfortunately, **many people can't access** the support they need to live independently in the community. A major reason why is because Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) is underfunded. We need to speak with one voice and share stories about how expanding equitable access to HCBS will transform lives.

Recent messaging research has revealed **best practices for how to talk about HCBS** and the individuals who rely on these services in ways that are persuasive to broad audiences.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ADVOCATES WHEN TALKING ABOUT HCBS

Using the term **"home"** is key, because it's simple to understand and conveys the clear idea of "home" vs. "institution." Adding "community" tends to confuse the issue.

Talking about **"care," "help," or "support" (singular nouns)** is more **persuasive** than "services" or "supports" (plural nouns).

Use "at-home" interchangeably with **"in-home"** or **"home-based"** or **"home-based model."**

Emphasize that investments in HCBS will provide a **meaningful choice for people** between institutions and home.

People currently understand intuitively that there isn't really a choice for most people and that **a lot of people are institutionalized who would do well at home.**

WHEN TALKING ABOUT HCBS, DO:

Pair "home" with singular nouns like **"care," "help," or "support."**

Use a few **examples** to explain what you mean: help **bathing, dressing, cooking, cleaning, transportation.**

Present this home-based model as an **alternative** to institutionalization.

Explain that we need more funding for home-based care because **more people are institutionalized than need to be.**

Convey that home-based care helps a lot of **people with different needs**, including older adults and people with disabilities, and **supports families.**

Emphasize that part of the home-based model we want to build includes someone to help families and individuals **navigate the system** in order to receive the support.

Convey that **we have the program to make this happen;** we just need Congress to provide more **funding** for at-home support **like they currently do for nursing homes.**

Mention that more funding would also ensure an adequate, **well-trained and better compensated workforce.**

Emphasize **possibility.** Access to at-home support for everyone who needs it can become a reality with adequate funding.

