

Rep. Debbie Dingell and CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure Visit Huron Valley PACE

YPSILANTI, MI – Oct. 25, 2022 – Huron Valley Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) recently hosted a visit from U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12) and Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). They led a Senior Town Hall at the day center to hear concerns of older adults, share updates on home- and community-based services (HCBS), and answer questions during Medicare open enrollment.

Huron Valley PACE is a program of Brio Living Services, formerly United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) & Porter Hills, and serves the psycho-social, medical and supportive needs of low-income adults age 55 and over who are nursing home-eligible. Its service area extends throughout Washtenaw, Monroe, and parts of Oakland, Wayne and Livingston counties. Brio Living Services is a leading provider of PACE services in the state, with five sites serving approximately 1,100 older adults annually across 15 counties.

Sonja Love Felton, executive director of Huron Valley PACE, introduced Rep. Dingell to the audience of PACE participants and community members as “a boldly strong advocate in Washington for all Michiganders. Throughout her nearly eight years in the House, Rep. Dingell has been a fierce champion for older adults, especially those needing home- and community-based care such as PACE.”

Felton thanked the congresswoman for inviting Brooks-LaSure to join the town hall meeting. “We are honored and pleased to provide the administrator, as a key health care leader in the Biden Administration, the opportunity to hear what is top of mind for older Michiganders,” she said. “Administrator Brooks-LaSure and her CMS colleagues have led important changes to Medicare and Medicaid, and we are thankful for her efforts.”

“I received a call that the CMS administrator wanted to come to Michigan, and could we host her at a PACE. You know how much I love this PACE,” said Rep. Dingell. “Brooks-LaSure is the most important person in health care because she is responsible for Medicare, which is the single largest provider of health care in our country. I want you to know how special it is that she chose to come here.”

Brooks-LaSure shared some of the updates that CMS has been working on, including the American Rescue Plan, which has increased Medicaid spending for HCBS by 10 percentage points from April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022. This provision was a direct result of the efforts by Rep. Dingell in partnership with U.S. Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA).

Michigan has participated in this initiative, and BRIO and Huron Valley PACE applaud the state for the steps it has taken to date to strengthen Medicaid HCBS.

“Rep. Dingell also has led other legislative efforts to make PACE more accessible for all older adults who could benefit from its services, such as the PACE Plus Act and the PACE Expanded Act,” Felton said. “On behalf of our Huron Valley PACE participants, our team and families, we are deeply grateful for her work.”

“Michigan has the third highest number of PACE centers in the country, and we’re going to get more, so spread the word,” Rep. Dingell said. “PACE works. I was a caregiver for my husband, John, and I understand the issues you’re facing. It’s getting harder and harder to get caregivers. All other work is possible when those you love are cared for. Period.”

More than a million people across the country are on the waiting list for home- and community-based care.

“We believe the national exposure that will result from this visit will help eliminate many of the obstacles that prevent many people from having access to PACE, and we appreciate the work of all involved,” said Shawn Bloom, president and CEO of the National PACE Association.

“You have the moon here at PACE,” said Rep. Dingell. Laura Garcia, a participant of Huron Valley PACE, added, “We also have the stars here with the PACE team members.”

The PACE interdisciplinary team addresses all of the health care needs of participants, including medical, pharmacy, occupational and physical therapy, nutrition and meals, health education, social and recreational activities, and door-to-door transportation. Most participants are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid and pay no additional fees for PACE services.

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The mission of Huron Valley PACE is to enhance the lives and independence of participants by providing state-of-the-art geriatric health and community-based services. Its vision is to serve as a local, regional and national resource in providing services that recognize the dignity, independence, and quality of life for older adults wishing to remain in their homes. For more information, contact huronvalleypace.org or call 734-572-5777.

Building on a foundation of over 165 years of combined service to older adults, Brio Living Services, formerly UMRC & Porter Hills, is a faith-based, nonprofit organization whose mission is welcoming all, partnering together, and enriching lives. Its vision is a world in which all are empowered to age well. Brio Living Services represents the second largest nonprofit senior living organization in Michigan and serves the most economically diverse population of older adults. With a tradition of exceptional quality and a commitment to cutting-edge care, Brio Living Services and its affiliates serve more than 8,000 older adults each year from 24 locations and service lines across 22 counties in the Michigan lower peninsula. Brio Living Services is one of the leading providers of PACE services in the state, with five sites serving approximately 1,100 older adults annually across 15 counties. For more information, call 734-433-1000 or 616-949-4975 or visit MyBrio.org.