

**Association on Aging in New York**

272 Broadway, Albany NY 12204-2717

Phone: (518) 449-7080 | Fax: (518) 449-7055

www.agingny.com**Association on Aging in New York Testimony**

Human Services Budget Hearing

February 9, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the impact of the Executive Budget on senior citizens and aging services programs in New York State. My name is Pat Sheehy and I am the Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Association on Aging in New York and Director of the Putnam County Office for Senior Resources. I would like to thank Senator Sue Serino, Chair of the Senate Aging Committee and Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, Chair of the Assembly Aging Committee for their dedication to older New Yorkers and the challenges that they face.

Our Association represents the 59 mostly county-based Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), also known as the Offices for the Aging, throughout New York State. These agencies design, fund, and coordinate programs that maintain seniors in their homes to help delay and possibly prevent the need for more medically intensive and costly health care services. The local planning process of AAAs ensures that government dollars are utilized effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of seniors in their communities. For example, the SOFA Community Living Program Grant yielded exceptional results for participants; 89% of participants did not enter a nursing home during the program, and the actual monthly cost for all 114 participants was \$253,764 compared to \$788,538 had these individuals spent down to Medicaid and either entered a nursing home or received home care.

The ever-expanding 60+ population coupled with more complex needs of those in the 75+ and 85+ cohorts has put a strain on New York's aging services network. In 2015, 20 percent (3.7 million) of NYS residents were 60+ years old for the first time in history, and due to longer life expectancies and the aging baby boom generation, this "age wave" will accelerate throughout the next three decades. By 2025, 51 counties will have 25% or more of their population over the age of 60. With more people living longer than ever before, New York State faces both an immense challenge and an opportunity.

The aging services structure has remained relatively unchanged since the Older Americans Act was enacted in 1965. The Older Americans Act provides funds to states primarily for care and services for the 60+ population, but the aging network's portfolio has expanded to assist other populations. Currently, \$207 million in State and Federal funding leverages

an additional \$235 million in resources from local government, private fundraising, participant contributions, and cost-sharing for aging services. The NYS Office for the Aging partners with 59 local AAAs that contract with more than 1,200 local organizations to deliver cost-effective aging services (non-clinical long-term services and supports) to at-risk older adults.

Over the last decade, funding has been static for non-Medicaid programs that serve older New Yorkers such as those provided through AAAs. The result: New Yorkers with long-term care needs end up on a waiting list for services such as home delivered meals, social adult day, transportation, and case management from AAAs and their subcontractors. The increase in the older adult population, coupled with health care delivery changes including the expansion of NY Connects into a fully functioning No Wrong Door (NWD) system, requires the aging services network to modernize to meet increasing demand. This network also requires infrastructure investments to ensure that the increasing number of older New Yorkers receive the services they need to remain independent through community-based services such as transportation, personal home care, home delivered meals, case management, and caregiver support. The 2016-17 Executive Budget includes the increased funding that the Legislature added last year. Once again, we thank you for providing that increase. While the Executive Budget baselines funding for certain programs, there remains a significant unmet need.

The Association on Aging in New York, along with our colleagues LiveOn NY and Lifespan, have developed a \$177 million multi-year plan to modernize long term services and supports for older New Yorkers, such as was done for the health care sector through Medicaid Redesign. The plan's community-based services allow New Yorkers to preserve their independence, delay nursing home admissions. The plan is as follows:

NY Connects No Wrong Door Sustainability- \$28 million annually

The federal Balancing Incentive Program (BIP) grant provides funds to expand and enhance NY Connects so that it becomes New York's No Wrong Door for information and assistance for long-term services and supports for both Medicaid and non-Medicaid individuals.

The roll-out of the State's NWD has begun, but a fully-functional and reliable NWD system for accessing unbiased information and assistance on long-term services and supports will depend on a commitment of funding, \$28 million annually, by New York State, under the Medicaid Global Cap.

Community Services for the Elderly- Additional \$15 million annually without local match

There are over 9,700 older adults on waiting lists in New York State. CSE funds are used for a wide array of programs and services: transportation, adult day services, in-home

care, personal emergency response systems, and others. The additional \$7.5 million in funding added over the past two years has helped reduce waiting lists and ensure older New Yorkers receive critical community-based services, but waiting lists still exist and will likely grow as a result of demand generated by both an increased aging population and the expansion of NY Connects/NWD. As such, an additional \$15 million annually without local match would help ensure the accessibility of programs and services to those nearly 10,000 waitlisted older adults.

New York Elder Caregiver Support Program- \$25 million annually

Our proposed additional funding of \$25 million annually under the Medicaid Global Cap would build on the existing Elder Caregiver Support Program and provide for enhanced services for the 4 million-plus family caregivers in New York State whose voluntary unpaid care is worth an estimated \$32 billion annually. The New York Elder Caregiver Support Program, offered through the State's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), provides a multifaceted system of support services for informal caregivers of older adults. Among the services offered are: respite (a top workforce issue) with home care and adult day care, one-on-one counseling, support groups, training, and community-level education through public presentations.

Elder Abuse- \$10 million annually

The crisis of elder abuse is under-recognized, under-reported and under-prosecuted. According to one New York State study, 260,000 cases of elder abuse go unreported each year, and for every one case of elder abuse reported, 23 cases are unreported. Financial exploitation is the most common form of elder abuse with only 1 out of 44 cases reported. Preliminary reports from an OCFS study found the costs to investigate, prosecute, and provide services to victims cost NYS \$1.5 billion annually. Community-based programs are on the front lines for connecting with elder abuse victims. They educate older adults about elder abuse prevention, provide social and legal services, link victims to resources such as law enforcement and APS, work with families, help victims access public benefits, and run victim support groups. New York State currently provides less than \$1 million statewide for elder abuse services. The Rochester-based Enhanced Multi-Disciplinary Team (EMDT) model program has recovered more than \$500,000 for financial elder abuse victims- more than the previous 10 years combined. A \$10 million increase in annual funding is needed to expand the role and success of EMDTs statewide and to support community-based programs that work to prevent the abuse and exploitation of older New Yorkers.

Aging Services Workforce Investment- \$35 million over 2-3 years

New York State's aging services network has historically relied on volunteers to deliver its Health Insurance Information Counseling Assistance Program, Long Term Care Ombudsmen Program, and Home Delivered Meals program. While volunteers are and always will be critically important to the aging network, volunteers cannot be a substitute for professional staff and the aging services workforce needs to be strengthened and expanded. Senior centers, of which there are 700 across NYS, provide integral health and wellness programs such as evidence-based preventative health programs. However, these centers lack funding support from both Federal and State governments. Increased funding of \$35 million over 2-3 years will help sustain the needs and numbers of older New Yorkers.

Network Staff Core Competencies Training- \$500,000 annually

\$500,000 annually would support a growing number of older adults, caregivers, and persons of all ages with disabilities by ensuring that the aging services network meets basic core competencies. These funds will help to develop a comprehensive core competencies training program for those working in the network.

Expand Pool of Case Managers Statewide- \$35 million over 2-3 years

Individuals who receive services through the aging network are assessed to determine a care plan and cost sharing. With a demographic shift from young to old, and a concentration on data analysis, area agencies on aging will require a new and expanded pool of case managers and Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) professionals. Through increased funding, our goal is to increase the number of case managers and LMSWs statewide by 500 over 2-3 years.

Targeted EISEP- \$25 million annually without local match

The Targeted Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (TEP) requires \$25 million annually without local match to build on the successful EISEP system. Increased funding will help the Program provide communities with enhanced tools to target and assist older New Yorkers who are at imminent risk of Medicaid spend-down and nursing home placement. Through adequate funding, the Program can provide intensive case management, additional home care, community-based services, and maximization of family supports.

Transportation- \$2.5 million annually

In order to achieve the State's goals of proper discharge planning, care transitions, reduction of hospital readmissions, and population health, seniors must have their transportation needs met so they can get to their medical appointments. Waiting lists for transportation have increased dramatically over the past year and many existing vehicles need maintenance work and operational upgrades. As we look to the future, we see innovative transportation and mobility models that could be explored and utilized by localities. Many AAA and nonprofit aging network partners use a volunteer-based assisted transportation program, while other have incorporated a system of paid drivers and mobility managers. \$2.5 million annually is needed to expand and enhance these existing systems to ensure they are able to serve the transportation demands of all older New Yorkers.

Technology Upgrades- \$1 million annually

The aging network's IT systems are often outdated and in need of software and technology upgrades. \$1 million in annual funding would help the aging services network upgrade to state-of-the-art program management software in order to increase efficiency, improve service coordination, and save valuable time and money in the long-run.

We have identified a potential source of funding for these investments. Since 2006, \$37 million in Federal dollars has been drawn down by New York State utilizing SOFA programs EISEP and CSE yet these funds have remained at the Department of Health. These programs are the reason New York has been able to draw down these funds and therefore these funds should be sub-allocated to SOFA for reinvestment in non-Medicaid aging services and programs. Programs and supports provided by AAAs and community-based partner organizations are an integral part of the continuum of care for all New Yorkers as they age. This comprehensive, multi-year plan will help ensure that older New Yorkers receive the services they need to remain independent.

Thank you and we look forward to working together to improve the lives of older New Yorkers.

