



*Area Agency on Aging 1-B*

# THE ADVOCATE

April 2016

## Appropriations Committees Recommend Funding Increase for Aging Services

Both the House and Senate Health and Human Services (HHS) Appropriations Committees voted to increase funding for the Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Budget. This is a significant first step toward securing an increase in aging services funding in FY 2017. If these funding recommendations are included in the final budget, they will help to support the over 7,000 older adults on waiting lists for in-home services like personal care, homemaking and home delivered meals.

The Senate HHS Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Marleau from Oakland County, voted to include a \$5 million increase for AASA in-home services in their budget recommendation. The House HHS Appropriations Subcommittee included a \$836,700 increase for AASA in-home services, which is a 5% increase in state funding for the program from the previous year. During the Subcommittee Meeting Representative Yanez from Sterling Heights introduced an amendment to increase the funding recommendation to \$5 million, but the amendment did not pass. Both proposals are expected to pass their respective chambers in their present form.

Following the State Revenue Estimating Conference on May 16th, Legislators from the HHS Appropriations Subcommittees will meet in a conference committee to determine a final funding recommendation for in-home services. This recommendation must be passed by the full legislature to go into effect.

The Silver Key Coalition, which is a group of 40 organizations from across the state committed to reducing waiting lists for aging service in Michigan, has estimated that an increase of \$5 million in state funding for AASA in-home services will be needed to serve the 7,000 seniors currently on waiting lists for essential in-home services across the state. For more information about the Silver Key Coalition's advocacy efforts, visit [www.silverkeycoalition.com](http://www.silverkeycoalition.com).

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## Michigan CARE Act Becomes Law

The Michigan Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act was signed by Governor Snyder on April 13th after being passed by the House this March. This law will support caregivers by providing them with the training and education they need when their loved one transitions home from the hospital.

The CARE Act allows patients to identify a caregiver when they enter the hospital. The hospital will then notify the caregiver when the patient is going to be discharged, and will provide instructions about the caregiving tasks they will perform when the patient comes home. The CARE Act will go into effect on July 12th.

## Older Americans Act Reauthorization Signed into Law

The Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2015 passed the Senate with unanimous bipartisan support on April 7th, and was signed by President Obama on April 19th. Reauthorizing the Older Americans Act (OAA) has been a goal of aging advocates since the bill's last reauthorization expired in 2011. This bill reauthorized the OAA for a three year period through 2019. Reauthorization provides an opportunity to modernize the law, while also showing a renewed commitment to the programs created by the OAA.

The OAA Reauthorization of 2015 contains few changes to the law; the most significant changes are listed below:

- The law contains specific recommendations that funding authorization levels for OAA programs should be increased by 6.77% to 7.083% over the next three years. However, these recommendations are non-binding, and funding levels will still be set annually through the budget process.
- A new "hold harmless" provision included in the law will mean that states with slower senior population growth like Michigan will have slightly reduced shares of future appropriations, and may experience slightly increased shares of future funding cuts. This new provision could reduce funding for Older Americans Act programs in Region 1-B by approximately \$35,000 annually.
- Minor changes to the Senior Nutrition Program to include more use of dietitians, a recommendation that meal providers use locally grown fresh foods in nutrition programs, and clarifications to the policy regarding supplemental foods provided with home delivered meals.

## Older Michiganians Day Rally on May 11

The Older Michiganians Day 2016 Legislative Platform has been released in advance of the May 11th event in Lansing. Older Michiganians Day is an annual event that brings together seniors, service providers, and advocates to discuss aging issues and meet with their legislators on the Capitol Lawn. The legislative platform outlines issues for advocates to focus on during the event

The Legislative Platform focuses on four key advocacy areas:

- Improving Access and Quality of Long-Term Supports and Services by supporting funding for the MI Choice Program and Aging and Adult Services Agency in-home services,
- Supporting Elder Abuse Prevention by adequately funding Adult Protective Services,
- Supporting Caregivers by investing in the Michigan Dementia Care and Support Pilot Project, and
- Enhancing Independent Living in the Community by supporting SB 395, which would create a tax credit for home modifications.

For more information about Older Michiganians Day please visit [www.oldermichigiansday.com](http://www.oldermichigiansday.com).



The Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) is a nonprofit agency serving the needs of older adults in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties.

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