



**AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
ADVOCACY ALERT
August 12, 2010**

ADVOCATE FOR MI CHOICE FUNDING IN 2011 STATE BUDGET

BACKGROUND:

The MI Choice Waiver is a Medicaid program that provides a variety of services in a person's home that are similar to those provided in a nursing home, at a much lower average cost: \$39/day versus \$160/day. The Governor is recommending MI Choice funding at \$190 million for FY 2011, a \$14 million "increase" which is actually a shift from nursing home spending since the funds will be used to transition more people out of facilities.

Both the House and Senate liked the Governor's increase and included it in their versions of the budget. In fact, the Senate added \$6 million over and above the Governor with the directive to transition even more nursing home residents. Michigan has one of the most successful Nursing Facility Transition Initiatives (NFTI) in the country. NFTI set a goal of 1200 residents transitioned in 2010 and is on target to exceed that goal by several hundred.

The Legislature is expected to finish work on the 2011 budget in August. Talk of more budget cuts is still in the air and any program not mandated, like MI Choice, is in jeopardy.

We need to convince a joint House-Senate Conference Committee to go the last mile in approving the "increase" in MI Choice.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Contact these members of the Conference Committee, thank them for their past support, and ask them to approve \$196 million for MI Choice in 2011.

Senator Roger Kahn, M.D.	(866) 305-2132	senrkahn@senate.michigan.gov
Senator John Pappageorge	(877) 736-1384	senjpappageorge@senate.michigan.gov
Senator Deb Cherry	(866) 305-2126	sendcherry@senate.mi.gov
Rep. Gary McDowell	(888) 737-4279	garymcdowell@house.mi.gov
Rep. George Cushingberry	(888) 347-8008	georgecushingberry@house.mi.gov
Rep. Kevin Green	(866) 538-4677	kevingreen@house.mi.gov

Here are some talking points:

- MI Choice is cost-effective, costing \$39/day compared with \$160/day for nursing home care.
- There are 7,000 people on the MI Choice waiting list statewide. These individuals are in serious jeopardy for institutionalization, at a much greater cost to the state.
- Thanks to MI Choice and other home care programs, nursing home expenditures dropped in Michigan for the first time in history from 2007-2009.