



**AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
ADVOCACY ALERT
June 17, 2010**

STOP MORE CUTS IN AGING SERVICES FOR 2011

BACKGROUND:

Vulnerable seniors have been victims of the state's budget crisis. Within the past year, programs funded by the Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) have been cut by \$7 million – an 18% loss. The Governor's budget recommendations for FY 2011 include more cuts in OSA services. Totalling \$2.3 million, the cuts would reduce in-home services, home-delivered meals, care management, volunteer programs, caregiver supports and other programs that help keep seniors living independently. Without these services, caregivers get burned out and nursing home placement is frequently the result, with seniors spending down their assets and going on Medicaid to pay the \$68,000 annual bill. If these cuts go into effect, more than 2,000 older adults would be affected.

While the Governor makes a recommendation, the Legislature makes budget decisions. The Senate has approved its version of the budget and it included the \$2.3 million in OSA cuts. But the House of Representatives is recommending no OSA cuts for 2011.

Your advocacy is needed to convince a joint House-Senate Conference Committee that more OSA cuts are 'penny wise and pound foolish.' Home and community-based care has proven cost-effective and can save Medicaid money by preventing unnecessary nursing home placement. Last year, \$4 million in OSA services for the most at-risk clients saved Medicaid \$140 million.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Contact these potential members of the Conference Committee and ask them to oppose any cuts in services for seniors funded by the Office of Services to the Aging for next year.

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:

- OSA services help vulnerable seniors stay in their own homes. They prevent seniors from going into nursing homes, spending down their assets, and then going on Medicaid.
- OSA services help seniors who are needy, some of whom are on waiting lists for the MI Choice waiver.
- Last year, \$4 million in OSA services saved Medicaid \$140 million
- There are 4,400 on waiting lists for OSA services like meals and home care.