



**AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
ADVOCACY ALERT
November 18, 2009**

**OSA PROGRAMS SLASHED 18% IN LAST FOUR MONTHS
~ *Another 20% cut likely without new revenues* ~**

Programs funded by the Office of Services to the Aging (OSA), including meals, home care, caregiver services and volunteer programs, funded at \$40 million one year ago, have been slashed by \$7 million (18%) within the past four months. Governor Granholm is directing state offices to plan for another 20% cut for next year if new no new revenues are approved by the Legislature.

BACKGROUND:

To address the problem of falling revenues, Governor Granholm recommended a package of tax increases and loophole closings to protect state programs. But leaders of the Democratic House and Republican Senate forged an agreement to achieve a balanced budget with all cuts and no new revenues. The House is led by Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford) and the Senate Leader is Senator Mike Bishop (R-Rochester). Despite their leaders' agreement, both chambers had second thoughts and did approve some new revenues – but the new revenue sources were different from each other as were plans on how to use any new revenues.

The result was a state budget with devastating cuts to state programs, including those providing a safety net to vulnerable older Michigianians. OSA cuts are only part of the story; there are numerous other cuts in prevention, dementia, mental health, and other services. And optional Medicaid benefits for eyeglasses, hearing aids, adult dental care, etc. were eliminated. In the meantime, Legislators are trumpeting their success in protecting the Michigan taxpayer by balancing the budget with no new taxes. 'No new tax' groups are praising Legislators for their tough decisions to cut programs and live within our means.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Deliver a two-part message:

- 1) your disappointment about cuts that will hurt frail seniors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups .
- 2) your willingness to support new taxes, closing loopholes, etc. to help the vulnerable.

Deliver this message to your own Representative and Senator. For contact information, go to www.mi-seniors.net and click on the Advocacy page.

Deliver this message to the two legislative leaders who decided to balance the budget with all cuts:

Rep. Andy Dillon	andydillon@house.mi.gov	(888) 737-3455
Senator Mike Bishop	senmbishop@senate.michigan.gov	(877) 924-7467

Use the two-part message outlined above.

6105 W. St. Joseph, Suite 204, Lansing, MI 48917 (517) 886-1029 www.mi-seniors.net

Here are some additional talking points:

- OSA cuts are denying services to 8,000 frail older adults.
- Helping seniors with home-based services is cost-effective and saves the state from spending more money on nursing homes.