

Return Service Requested



Aging Alert

Vol. 36, No. 1

January-February, 2011

AGING FUNDING – WHAT’S AHEAD?

With waiting lists at an all-time high after budget cuts slashed 28% of state funding, the aging network is waiting to see what’s in store for them in Governor Rick Snyder’s first budget proposal. Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) programs including meals-on-wheels, in-home services and adult day care have lost \$10 million since fiscal year 2009.

As of September 2010, 4,700 older Michigianians are on waiting lists for in-home services and 1,400 are on lists for meals-on-wheels. About two-thirds have been waiting for over 6 months.

Governor Snyder presents his budget plan on February 17 and it will include spending projections for fiscal years 2012 and 2013. The Governor’s budget is only a recommendation, since the Legislature has the constitutional authority to adopt the state budget. Aging programs are part of the Department of Community Health, which includes both OSA services and the MI Choice Waiver, part of the Medicaid program.

The Legislature will hold budget hearings soon after the Governor’s budget is released – an opportunity for affected citizens and groups to react to what has been proposed

. . . meals-on-wheels and in-home services - cost an average of \$1,700 a year, providing care in a nursing home costs Medicaid an average of \$68,000

by the Governor.

“I hope Governor Snyder and our legislators are aware of the cost savings offered by OSA programs,” says Judy Sivak, President of the Area Agencies on Aging Association. “While OSA services – meals-on-wheels and in-home services - cost an average of

“OSA services are an effective Medicaid prevention program.”

**Judy Sivak
Area Agencies on Aging**

\$1,700 a year, providing care in a nursing home costs Medicaid an average of \$68,000,” observes Sivak. “OSA services are an effective Medicaid prevention program.”

continued on page 3

NEW LAWS OF INTEREST TO OLDER MICHIGANIANS

Here are more new laws passed in 2010 affecting older adults. For more information, go to www.michiganlegislature.org and click on Public Acts.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (Public Act 212) Allows the Department of Human Services to consolidate up to three counties into a single administrative unit. Introduced as Senate Bill 1302, sponsored by Senator Mickey Switalski. Effective 11/17/2010.

ESTATE TAX (Public Act 224) If an individual made a will under the assumption that the estate tax would be in effect when he/she died, allows the estate to be divided as if it was still in effect. (The federal estate tax was repealed for the period January 1 – December 31, 2010 and will be reinstated on January 1, 2011.) Introduced as House Bill 6197, sponsored by Representative Andrew Kandrevas. Effective 12/10/2010.

PUBLIC TRANSIT (Public Acts 236-245) This ten-bill package amends various statutes promoting economic development, to allow development to include public transit facilities. Bill sponsors are Reps. Byrnes, Clemente, Schmidt, Haines, Nathan and Senators Allen, Jacobs, Cropsey, Gilbert and Thomas. Effective 12/14/2010.

FOSTER CARE (Public Act 265) Amends the Foster Care and Adoption Act to require that: relatives be notified when a child is removed from his/her home; preference be given to placing the child with relatives; and the placement decision be made in the best interests of the child. Introduced as House Bill 4118, sponsored by Rep. Gino Polidori. Effective 12/14/2010.

BACKGROUND CHECKS (Public Acts 291-293) Changes state laws regulating background checks for workers in nursing homes, hospices, adult foster care homes, home health agencies, etc. Changes include eliminating the requirement for a check when a worker transfers to another facility, and prohibiting facilities from granting conditional employment before obtaining a criminal history unless certain conditions are met. Introduced as Senate Bills 1253-1255, sponsored by Sens. Patricia Birkholz, Tony Stamas and Buzz Thomas. Effective 12/16/2010.

PROPERTY TAX DEFERRALS (Public Act 311) Allows a county to defer taxes for a senior, person with a disability, veteran or veteran's widow if a deferment was granted the previous year and the person resides in the same residence. Introduced as House Bill 4119, sponsored by Rep. Kathy Angerer. Effective 12/21/2010.

IDENTITY THEFT (Public Acts 314-317) This package of bills provides for the forfeiture of property associated with a violation of the Identity Theft Protection Act. Also increases penalties for violations of the act. Introduced as HB 4325, introduced by Rep. Doug Spade, and SBs 315-317, introduced by Sen. Ray Basham. Effective 4/1/2011.

IDENTITY THEFT (Public Acts 318 & 319) Expands current protections to include account passwords in the definition of personal information, and expands criminal activity to include creating fraudulent emails or websites using the name of a legitimate business. Introduced as SBs 149 & 150, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Patterson. Effective 4/1/2011.

HIV/AIDS TESTING (Public Act 320) Revises current state requirements regarding informed consent and counseling provisions attached to HIV/AIDS testing. Requires notification

that a test can be ordered in a health facility without a patient's permission if staff are exposed to the patient's blood. Introduced as HB 4583, sponsored by Rep. Roy Schmidt. Effective 1/1/2011.

UNEMPLOYMENT (Public Act 322) Prohibits the state from reducing unemployment benefits when certain rollover distributions are made from pension plans. Introduced as HB 5756, sponsored by Rep. Steve Lindberg. Effective 12/21/2010.

TRUSTS (Public Acts 325-327) Makes a variety of changes to state law regulating trusts. One change would allow a trustee to terminate a trust if it is less than \$50,000. Introduced as SB 1376, sponsored by Sen. Alan Cropsey, SB 1377, sponsored by Sen. Hansen Clarke, and SB 1378, sponsored by Sen. Tony Stamas. Effective 12/21/2010.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS (Public Acts 377 & 378) Amends current law regulating charitable organizations to streamline reporting requirements, increase the exemption for reporting from the current \$8,000 to \$25,000/year, and prohibit a variety of fraudulent conduct. Introduced as SBs 1528 & 1577, sponsored by Sen. Mark Jansen. Effective 3/30/2011.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS (Public Acts 380 & 381) Requires license applicants for adult foster care and homes for the aged to get a criminal background check. Denies a license to an applicant who has ever been convicted of a felony, or has been convicted of vulnerable adult abuse within the past 10 years. Introduced as SBs 1101 & 1102, sponsored by Sen. Mike Nofs. Effective 12/22/2010.

continued from page 1

Also of concern is the fate of the MI Choice Medicaid Waiver, targeted to adults 18+ who need a nursing home level-of-care, allowing them to stay at home with supports. While MI Choice has seen increases in recent years, the program still has a waiting list of 6,700. One of these individuals is Roberta Opolski's daughter, who is 20-years-old and has Cerebral Palsy, resulting in physical and mental disabilities. Her daughter needs constant supervision. Roberta worries about leaving her daughter alone in the house, but is forced to do it to take care of business. Roberta also has physical problems stemming from a serious auto accident. She lives on a Social Security check and small pension, and buys her own high deductible health insurance. She cannot afford to hire a sitter. Relatives are helpful but they have jobs and their own children. Roberta's daughter is on Medicaid and has been on the MI Choice waiting list for three years. Roberta has considered residential placement but doesn't like the quality of care she has seen. She wants her daughter to stay with her, and that's what her daughter wants too.

SAVE THE DATES

"THE AGE OF CHANGE"

**24TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the
AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION**

MAY 25 & 26, 2011

KELLOGG CENTER, EAST LANSING

DID YOU KNOW?

The Epidemic of Alzheimer's Disease

- An estimated 10 million Baby Boomers will develop Alzheimer's. Of those who reach 85, nearly one in two will get it. Many of the rest will be helping someone who has it.
- Most people with Alzheimer's survive an average of 4-6 years, but many live as long as 20 years with the disease.
- By the age of 80, 4% of Americans have entered a nursing home. But for people with Alzheimer's, 75% are living in a nursing home by the age of 80.
- Alzheimer's disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the U.S. , killing more people than breast and prostate cancer combined.
- While death rates for other major diseases are going down, the number of Americans dying from Alzheimer's has risen 66% since 2000. Among the top ten causes of death, Alzheimer's is the only one without a way to prevent it, cure it or slow its progression.
- In 2009, 11 million Americans provided 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care to loved ones with Alzheimer's worth \$144 billion, more than Medicare and Medicaid spending on Alzheimer's.
- One-third of Alzheimer's caregivers have been providing care for five years or more, and two-thirds of Alzheimer's caregivers rate their stress as high or very high.
- America now spends \$172 billion caring for people with all dementias and costs could reach over \$1 trillion by 2050, not counting inflation.
- A person with Alzheimer's costs Medicare three times more and Medicaid nine times more than a person without the disease.
- The federal government spends much less each year on Alzheimer's research than on cancer, heart disease and HIV -- \$6 billion for cancer, \$4 billion for heart disease, \$3 billion for HIV/AIDS, and \$480 million for Alzheimer's.
- For every \$100 the government spends on Alzheimer's research, it spends \$25,000+ for health care and long term care for people with dementia.
- Delaying the onset of Alzheimer's by 5 years would cut public spending on the disease by 45%.

Statistics taken from the Alzheimer's Association's 2011 report: "Generation Alzheimer's: The Defining Disease of the Baby Boomers," www.alz.org.

Aging Alert is published ten months each year by the Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan. Reproduction of articles not permitted without permission. Call (517) 886-1029. Annual subscription rate: \$12 individuals, \$24 organizations. Editor: Mary Ablan