



State Budget: Great News for Older Adults!

First Increase in Five Years for OSA Programs, and A 23% Increase for MI Choice



State legislators came through for older adults and adults with disabilities, approving funding increases to help them live independently in their homes and communities. The FY 2013 Department of Community Health budget includes increases for Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) programs, the *MI Choice* Medicaid Waiver, and *MI Choice* Nursing Facility Transition program (NFT).

Office of Services to the Aging: The first budget in five years with an increase in state funding!

\$1.1 million more for community services allocated through the Area Agencies on Aging.

MI Choice: A 23% increase in funding—enough to reduce wait lists and maintain the successful NFT!

Current Year Funding (FY 2012):	\$229.9 million to serve current consumers
Plus	11.7 million to serve additional consumers
Plus	16.1 million to absorb current NFT consumers into <i>MI Choice</i>
Plus	24.6 million for new NFT transitions
Next Year Funding (FY 2013)	\$282.3 million.....a 23% increase!

The *MI Choice* NFT Program will be funded sufficiently to transition 1,200 individuals from institutional care to community-based living. Transitions from nursing homes to the *MI Choice* program is one goal named on Governor Rick Snyder’s MiScorecard. To view the current Community Health department scorecard, click on http://www.michigan.gov/documents/openmichigan/DCH_Scorecard_385004_7.pdf.

In addition, *Adult Home Help* received a 1%, \$3 million increase, and nursing homes received a 0.5%, \$10 million increase.

AAA 1-B salutes the enthusiastic advocates who wrote letters, sent e-mails, made phone calls, and personally met with legislators. In addition, AAA 1-B would like to acknowledge with gratitude legislative committee leaders from the region who were instrumental in securing the funding increases: Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville (R-Monroe), Senator Vincent Gregory (D-Southfield), and Representative Chuck Moss (R-Birmingham).

Success!

Ten Elder Abuse Bills Pass in State House of Representatives

At long last, vulnerable adults in Michigan will receive greater protection from the crimes of physical, mental, and financial abuse. Ten of the eighteen bills that comprise the Elder Abuse package of legislation were passed by the House of Representatives and have been sent to Governor Rick Snyder for his signing into law. Elder Abuse coalitions and advocacy groups throughout the state have spent six years educating legislators and the public on the harm that elder abuse and financial exploitation imposes on adults who cannot protect themselves. Since 2006, bills addressing this mostly hidden problem have been introduced in every legislative session, only to expire. According to the Office of Services to the Aging, in Michigan an estimated 90,000 older and vulnerable adults suffer abuse, neglect, or exploitation each year. It is believed that only 1 in 10 cases are reported to authorities, and in cases of financial exploitation, perhaps only 1 in 25 cases are reported. The ten bills passed include:

- 454 – Allows testimony by videotape
- 455, 465, 468 – Increases penalties and sentencing guidelines for elder abuse perpetrators
- 457 – Medical examiners may report a suspicious death to an elder death review team
- 459—Increases penalties for a fraudulently-obtained signature
- 461—Increases safeguards to protect wards from unscrupulous guardians
- 462—Nursing home employees to report suspected abuse to state without repercussion from employer
- 464—Creates state model for involved agencies to coordinate investigation of alleged abuse
- 466 – Creates a Senior Alert program to coordinate a missing-persons notification, similar to the Amber Alert



Advocates from Pontiac's Golden Opportunity Club at Older Michiganians Day 2011

Four of the remaining bills appear to have stalled in the House Banking and Financial Services Committee. **Advocates are encouraged to contact Rep. Marty Knollenberg** (R-Troy) who serves as committee chairman and ask that he hold hearings on these bills. Some individuals may not know that family members, caregivers, or financial advisors who are named on their bank accounts may have full access to the funds. The new disclosure law would require depositors to sign an acknowledgement that they understand joint account-holder rights. While the law would apply only to state-chartered financial institutions, protection offered to these depositors can be invaluable. Rep. Knollenberg can be reached at (517)373-1783 or by e-mail at martyknollenberg@house.mi.gov.

The statewide elder abuse coalition continues to push for passage of all the bills on or before the June 20th Older Michiganians Day advocacy event on the Capitol lawn, where a celebration to mark this historic achievement for older adults will take place.



New Law to Prevent Elder Abuse through Power of Attorney Assignment



Governor Rick Snyder signed into law legislation that clarifies the provisions of Durable Powers of Attorney, one of the most common instruments of elder abuse. Individuals who assume power of attorney must now sign a form accepting financial responsibility, agree to keep financial accounts separate, and promise to act in the best interest of the person they represent. Congratulations go to Senator Steve Bieda (D-Warren) for introducing this much needed bill.



U.S. House of Representatives plan for deeper budget cuts unlikely to move forward

The House of Representatives passed a second FY 2013 budget bill renouncing the automatic \$1.2 trillion cuts in across-the-board spending, a result of the 2011 debt ceiling deal, and instead recommended targeted cuts to discretionary programs. While the House budget stands little chance of being taken up in the Senate, it does send a message that all discretionary programs, including Older Americans Act programs, are at risk. Certain non-OAA programs that benefit older adults were specifically targeted for cuts, and may be revisited as budget negotiations continue:

- Repeal of the Prevention and Public Health Fund which supports evidence-based training to help individuals manage chronic diseases and reduce their risk of falling.
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) funding would be cut \$33 billion. SNAP benefits, formerly known as food stamps, can be used by low income individuals to purchase home-delivered and congregate meals.
- Repeal of Social Services Block Grants which local communities use to fund transportation, Adult Protective Services, and assistance with placement into Adult Foster Care or Homes for the Aged.

With Congress focused on the upcoming election, it is unlikely that a FY 2013 budget will be passed before November, but instead government services will likely be funded through a continuing resolution when FY 2013 begins on October 1. **Should the automatic cuts occur as scheduled in January 2013, AAA 1-B stands to lose nearly one million dollars in funding for nutrition programs, in-home supportive services and other services.**

Sources: <http://thehill.com/blogs/on-the-money/budget/226703-house-votes-to-replace-pentagon-cuts-mandated-by-debt-deal>,
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/SSBG_FY_2011-2012_366535_7.pdf

AARP releases report on long-term care for Michigan's policymakers

A white paper released by AARP confirms what Area Agency on Aging 1-B has long advocated: a comprehensive person-centered, long-term care system will serve the needs of consumers and their families and also provide efficiencies in public spending. The paper, titled *Consumer-Focused, Cost Effective Long Term Care for an Age-Friendly Michigan*, finds that:

- The overwhelming majority of Michigan voters prefer to receive long-term care services at home or in a home-like setting.
- An array of alternatives to higher cost nursing homes exists, and other states make these alternatives more available for residents than Michigan does. Thirty-five states spend a smaller proportion of their long-term care dollars on nursing homes than Michigan does.
- A national analysis published in 2011 found that home and community-based services produce an average annual public expenditure savings of \$57,338 per participant.
- Providing better and more meaningful supports for family caregivers is essential to the well-being of Michigan's long-term care system.

To read the full report, go to <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving/info-04-2012/improve-long-term-care-mi1837.html> or call Ann Langford at (248) 262-1282 for a paper copy.

OLDER MICHIGANIANS DAY 2012

Join the Senior **WAVE**

WE ADVOCATE, VOTE, and ENERGIZE the ECONOMY!

WEDNESDAY
June 20, 2012
State Capitol Lawn,
Lansing
10:30AM-2:30PM

JOIN US FOR AN EXCITING DAY

- A Rally on the Capitol Lawn
- Remarks from Legislative Leaders
- Meetings with Legislators
- Senior Citizen of the Year Awards



2011-2012 Legislative Platform

- #1— Invest in quality Long-Term Care options focused on cost-effective solutions that meet the needs of citizens.
- #2— Provide suitable housing, transportation and health care choices to support independent living and strengthen the economy.
- #3— Ensure safety and security through elder abuse protections.

Can't come to Lansing? Advocate from Home!!

YOUR elected leaders make decisions that can impact the independence and safety of older adults and adults with disabilities. Contact them today.

State Senators: 517-373-2400, find e-mails at <http://senate.michigan.gov/>

State Representatives: 517-373-0135, find e-mails at <http://house.michigan.gov/>

Operators will direct you to their offices.

Older Michiganians Day 2012 is sponsored by:



A nonprofit corporation and independent licensee
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For more information, contact Ann at Area Agency on Aging 1-B at (248) 262-1282, or by e-mail: alangford@aaa1b.com

www.oldermichiganiansday.com