



Area Agency on Aging 1-B

THE ADVOCATE

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Silver Key Coalition Seeks to Make Michigan a No Wait State for Senior In-Home Services

The Silver Key In-Home Services Advocacy Coalition (SKC) is a group of over 25 agencies, coalitions and aging service providers who joined together during the summer of 2013 to advocate for an increase in Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) in-home services funding. These services such as personal care, homemaking, medication management, care management, home delivered meals, respite, and chore/minor home repair help Michigan's seniors who are not eligible for Medicaid long term care services to stay where they want to be as they age, their own home.

Due to state and federal funding cuts paired with the increasing senior population in Michigan, we now find over 4,500 seniors across the state languishing on wait lists for basic assistance. Nearly half of those on wait lists have been waiting for longer than 180 days for services.

The goal of the Silver Key Coalition is to end the wait list for seniors by raising OSA funding by \$10 million over the course of 3 years with an initial amount of \$5 million in FY 15 and \$2.5 million in FY 16 and 17.

Governor Rick Snyder shared his support in the State of the State Address delivered on January 16 when he called to make Michigan a "No Wait State" for senior in-home services and once again in the release of his executive budget requesting an increase of \$5 million for the Office of Services to the Aging in-home service programs. Additionally, increased funding was requested by the governor, \$9 million for the MI Choice Waiver Program and \$1 million in new funding for the prevention of elder abuse which includes training professionals in the medical and financial fields. This was exciting news for seniors, advocates and the Silver Key Advocacy Coalition, but now the work starts. The Silver Key Coalition along with as many advocates as possible must help to educate the legislature on the value of in-home services.

To provide a foundation for our advocacy efforts, the SKC has developed a white paper entitled, "The Extent and Impact of Unmet In-Home Service Need on Michigan's Non-Medicaid Eligible Seniors, Adults with Disabilities and their Family Caregivers." The full document is available at www.silverkeycoalition.com; however, key findings of this investigation that policy makers, legislators, advocates, and other stakeholders should know are:

- In 2014 there are nearly 4,500 seniors languishing on wait lists for basic services such as home-delivered meals and help with bathing, dressing, medication, shopping and household chores. About half of the individuals on the wait lists have been waiting for more than 180 days.

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- Individuals on wait lists for extended periods of time are:
 - More likely to end up living in a nursing home
 - Less likely to remain living in their own home
 - More likely to seek health care from a hospital emergency room
 - More likely to die waiting for assistance.
- An increase of \$5 million for the fiscal year 2015 will be needed to allow the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging in-home services programs to begin addressing the service needs of those on wait lists, accommodate anticipated new requests for assistance, and begin addressing the needs of the underserved population of individuals who are receiving assistance, but not in the amount that they need due to service rationing.
- The effort to make Michigan a “No Wait State” for in-home services will be a key component of a larger strategy to make Michigan a retirement destination of choice that attracts and retains retirees, and captures the significant social and economic benefits of an aging population.
- A \$5 million investment will yield many collateral benefits to taxpayers, businesses and the state, including:
 - Creating approximately 200 new jobs
 - Leverage matching federal local, and private contributions of an additional \$1.7 million
 - Return approximately \$350,000 in state tax revenue
 - 75% of food purchased from Michigan based sources

Why a Silver Key?

The Silver Key Coalition believes that in-home services are the key to independence for Michigan’s seniors and those with keys to one’s home have access to safety, security and freedom. The coalition is asking Michigan’s legislature to unlock access to the basic in-home services that help to keep Michigan’s seniors happy, healthy, and where they want to be – in their own homes.

The Silver Key Coalition finds that a FY 2015 allocation of \$5 million in state general revenue funding for in-home services provided through the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, coupled with the leveraging of participant donations and other funding sources, will represent a significant first step in eliminating the state’s chronic in-home service wait lists of older Michigianians.

The Silver Key Coalition needs your help. Over the coming days, weeks and months we will be asking for your assistance by calling, emailing and visiting with your legislators to request their support in making Michigan a No Wait State for senior in-home services. Please consider joining our efforts.

State Budget Hearings to Begin Later this Month

With the release of the Executive Budget on February 5, all eyes are on the legislature as they work to allocate funding for FY 2015. Of particular importance to the aging network is the appropriation for the Department of Community Health (DCH) which houses the Office of Services to the Aging. Both the House and Senate will review the Executive Budget proposal, listen to testimonies from the administration and the public before recommending funding levels to the full house and senate. Any citizen or group has the ability to share their thoughts and is invited to give their input. On the next page is the schedule of appropriations hearings and opportunities for public testimony.

Senate Department of Community Health Subcommittee:Location: State Capitol, 3rd Floor, Senate Appropriations Room

Date/Time	Topic
2/13/14 1:30-5:00 PM	Testimony from DCH officials and an overview of the DCH budget and the Governor's recommendations
2/20/14 1:30-5:00 PM	Testimony from DCH officials on behavioral health, aging, and public health. Public testimony on these topics to follow.
2/27/14 1:30-5:00 PM	Testimony from DCH officials on Medicaid. Public testimony on Medicaid to follow.

House Department of Community Health Subcommittee:Location: State Capitol, 3rd Floor, House Appropriations Room

Date/Time	Topic
2/12/14 10:30 AM – Noon	Testimony from DCH officials and an overview of the DCH budget and the Governor's recommendations. No public testimony.
2/19/14 10:30 AM – Noon	Testimony from DCH officials on aging, and public health. No public testimony.
2/24/14 9:00 AM – Noon 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Public testimony only.
2/26/14 10:30 - Noon	Testimony from DCH officials on Medicaid. No public testimony.
3/3/14 9:00 AM – Noon 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Public testimony only
3/5/14 10:30 AM – Noon	Testimony from DCH officials on behavioral health.

Older Americans Act Reauthorization Update

The first hearings are scheduled with the U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee for the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act on February 11, 2014. This legislation is designed to modernize the Older Americans Act for the first time since 2006. The Reauthorization of the Older American's Act will help ensure that the aging network can continue to support the needs of our rapidly growing older adult population and their caregivers.

Call or write your U.S. Representatives to share the simple message that now is the time to reauthorize the Older American's Act. You can find your U.S. Representative by calling (202) 224-3121 or by visiting: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>.

Empower Older Citizen's Month

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B has teamed with the Michigan Senior Advocates Council (MSAC) to offer an opportunity for seniors to connect with their legislators to share their ideas, views and concerns and to hear from their legislator on how they are working to support Michigan's seniors. This type of direct advocacy makes a strong impression on our legislators who can then use their constituent's messages to make changes that protect Michigan's seniors.

With the appropriations process beginning in Lansing, MSAC representatives have scheduled in-district meetings with local legislators who sit on the appropriations committees.

Both Senator Vincent Gregory (D-Oakland) and Representative Paul Muxlow (R-St. Clair) are eager to hear from you on what matters to Michigan's seniors. Below is the information for these in district meetings.

	Representative Paul Muxlow	Senator Vincent Gregory	
District	District 83, St. Clair County including Burtchville and Fort Gratiot Townships and the City of Port Huron	District 14, Oakland County including cities of Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Huntington woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak, Southfield and Southfield Township	
Date	Monday March 10, 2014	March 17, 2014	
Time	3:30 – 5:30 PM	10:00 -11:30 AM	1:00 – 2:00 PM
Location	Lexington Community Center 6964 Huron Ave. Lexington, MI 48450	Oak Park Rec. Building 14300 Oak Park Blvd. Oak Park, MI 48237	Southfield Public Library 26300 Evergreen Rd. Southfield, MI 48076

Possible topics to discuss with your legislator include but are certainly not limited to:

- How have you made Michigan's seniors a priority?
- How do you plan on improving the quality of life for Michigan's seniors?
- With the current budget surplus, how can that be used to benefit seniors?
- What have you done, or what do you continue to work on to protect seniors from elder abuse?
- What is your opinion on proposed changes to Michigan's Auto No Fault system? How could this legislation impact seniors?
- There is legislation (SB 636) that would allow AT&T to discontinue landline service beginning in 2017. What is your opinion of this legislation? Do you feel this legislation does enough to protect vulnerable seniors who rely on landline telephone service?

Please join us for these important meetings to share your thoughts and opinions on what matters to Michigan's seniors.



The Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) is a nonprofit agency serving the needs of older adults in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties.

Contact Ryan Cowmeadow, (248) 262-1282 or by e-mail at rcowmeadow@aaa1b.com to join the Senior Advocacy Network or receive copies of the AAA 1-B reports referenced in The Advocate.