



Congress Approaches Budget Deadline While Debating Tax Reform

Congress has until December 8 to take action on setting the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 federal budget. It is likely that lawmakers will either reach a long-term funding agreement or pass another short-term continuing resolution, but if no budget agreement is reached, a federal budget shutdown would occur.

Current budget proposals for aging programs differ in the House and Senate. The House proposed eliminating funding for the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP), while the Senate proposed flat funding for this program. Michigan's SHIP, called the Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP), provides local, in-depth, health insurance counseling and assistance to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. The House passed an amendment to their budget proposal that would increase funding for Older Americans Act Title III-B by \$14.2 million, while the Senate has proposed flat funding. Title III-B is used to fund a variety of social service programs, including in-home personal care, chore service, transportation, and housekeeping.

Throughout November, congressional leaders have been also debating various proposals to reform the tax code. One element of the debate that could impact the older adult population are proposed changes to the medical expense deduction. This deduction allows taxpayers with high health care costs to deduct medical expenses from their taxes. The House Tax Policy plan would eliminate this deduction, but it is maintained in the current Senate proposal. 55% of all households claiming the deduction had one person aged 65 or older. Additionally, aging advocates are concerned about the impact these proposals could have on the federal budget as a whole. If a new tax plan were to increase the federal deficit, it would place pressure on the budget for discretionary programs, such as the Older Americans Act.

Feedback Requested on MI Choice Program

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is beginning the process to renew the MI Choice waiver program application with the federal government. This renewal represents an opportunity to update the program to better address the needs and preferences of the population it serves. MDHHS has scheduled a series of meetings for stakeholders, including program participants, family members, caregivers, advocates, providers, and waiver agency staff. The intent of the meetings is to solicit input and opinions regarding the elements of the waiver program that work well, those that might need improvement, and proposals for new program elements.

December 7, 2017 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
The Senior Alliance- 5454 Venoy Road; Wayne

December 21, 2017 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
3215 Eaglecrest Drive, NE; Grand Rapids

December 11, 2017 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Region II Area Agency on Aging
102 North Main Street; Brooklyn

January 10, 2018 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Capitol Commons Center, 400 South Pine Street,
Lansing (Conference Rooms E & F)