



## New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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### 2005-06 State Budget Platform

The proposed 2005-2006 Executive Budget underscores the ongoing pressures in New York to adequately fund and support the critical programs serving the State's vulnerable populations. The New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging (NYSAAAA) has identified several important areas for increased funding and recognition. Programs offered by the 59 Area Agencies on Aging strengthen community supports, enhance the quality of life in our communities and help maintain seniors in their homes. As importantly, the programs offered by our members play a critical role in helping people avoid dependency on Medicaid and other more costly programs. In an era of cost containment, our programs help control spending, maximize the involvement of family and other informal supports (who provide 80 percent of all long-term care) while meeting the needs of seniors. Caregivers help avoid over \$11.8 billion in health care spending in New York annually.

The following are the important areas affecting services to seniors:

- **Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) \$34,972,000** (Executive Budget adds \$10 million)

Created in 1987, EISEP provides coordinated case management and home care services to maintain frail older adults in their homes, deflecting costs from Medicaid. Services include: case management; in-home services and housekeeping/chore services; non-institutional respite such as social adult day care, companion and in-home services; and ancillary services including, repair, maintenance and modification of a client's living environment as well as personal emergency response systems.

It is important to recognize that the Governor's proposed budget calls for a doubling of EISEP funding over two years. The significant increase will strengthen this flagship program, and expand cost-effective in-home services to meet the growing demand. The proposed \$10 million increase in funding for this budget year will provide in-home services to 6,100 additional at-risk seniors and case management to 5,000 additional seniors. If adopted in 2006-07, a second year of EISEP program expansion would serve approximately 51,000 seniors -- 20,000 more seniors than are currently being served by the program. *We strongly support the SFY 2005-06 Executive Budget proposal for a \$10 million increase in EISEP, or an appropriation of \$34,972,000.*

- **Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) Program \$16,621,000** (Executive Budget adds \$250,000)

Established in 1979, CSE provides cost-effective, non-medical community-based services to frail, low-income elderly to allow them to maintain their independence at home. The program's flexibility makes it an effective vehicle to adapt to meet the needs of the growing senior population. CSE listens to communities about their needs. The resulting services include: community-based long-term care services (adult day services, case management, homemaking/personal care, housekeeping/chore, home delivered meals); congregate-related services (congregate meals, escort services, transportation, senior center recreation and education); and other ancillary programs (legal assistance, personal emergency response services).

The SFY 2005-06 Executive Budget proposes an appropriation of \$16,621,000, or a \$250,000 increase for CSE. This represents a 1.5 percent increase in funding for a program that touches the lives of over 81,000 seniors. *We support the Governor's proposed increase of \$250,000 and believe that additional funding should be pursued for this program.*

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** **\$17, 209,000**

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SNAP was created in 1984 and provides nutritious meals and related services to the frail elderly at high nutritional risk, enabling them to remain in their own homes. The Governor's proposed budget maintains funding at the 2004-2005 level of \$17,209,000. Additional funds are needed to keep pace with inflation (currently at over 3 percent), repair and replace food preparation equipment and vehicles utilized to transport meals, and address the increased meal costs due to rising gasoline and milk prices. *We recommend an increase of at least \$1 million in statewide SNAP funding for SFY 2005-06.* This program can have an immediate and dramatic impact on the lives of seniors!

- **Medicaid Restructuring**

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There is a broad-based recognition that controlling costs in Medicaid is necessary. However, efforts to control costs through services eliminations and eligibility restrictions have cross-over implications. As eligibility for Medicaid tightens, more seniors can be expected to seek other programs such as those offered by Area Agencies. Elimination of services that are used extensively by seniors could adversely affect their ability to remain at home.

- **“Access to Home” Program**

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We support the 2005-2006 Executive Budget proposal for \$10 million to the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) for a new “Access to Home” program to help low/moderate income people stay in their own homes through modifications, home improvements and other steps. This funding is an important additional investment for supports to people with disabilities, some of which will be seniors served by Area Agencies on Aging. The projected growth in the senior population has been well-documented, and this funding provides additional assistance to seniors and individuals with disabilities to help them remain in their homes and communities.

- **Home Care Demonstration Projects**

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The Executive Budget authorizes up to four demonstration projects to provide services in community-based rather than institutional settings. Under this proposal, home care rates would be enhanced while the State seeks a Federal waiver to provide other services — including respite — through these programs. The goal of the Medicaid waiver will be to avoid more costly nursing home placement for individuals that are able to live in their own home with the appropriate support.

- **Elderly Pharmaceutical Assistance Program (EPIC)**

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EPIC has a long history of providing comprehensive drug benefits to the seniors of our state, and we support efforts to ensure a seamless system for EPIC enrollees when the new Medicare Part D provisions are implemented. The program currently provides prescription drug cost savings to over 350,000 people throughout the State; more people are served under New York's pharmacy assistance program than in any other state! The 2005-06 Executive Budget proposes funding of \$841 million, reflecting the proposed improved coordination with the Medicare Part D program.