

The New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging provides education, policy development, and resources to the 59 county offices for the aging in New York State.



Position Statement 2009-10 State Budget

The New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging believes the State Budget should focus resources on community-based critical care direct services to keep seniors at home and reduce Medicaid costs and nursing home placements. Our principles of funding prioritization are as follows:

- In light of the Budget deficit, the economic downturn, and inflation, resources must be targeted to seniors with greatest need. The strongest impact will be achieved by strengthening and enhancing community-based programs with a proven track record.
- Core programs of EISEP, CSE, SNAP, transportation and caregiver support services keep seniors in the community, reduce Medicaid costs, and prevent nursing home placement.
- Caregiver supportive services are imperative – caregivers provide 80% of all long-term care – saving New York State an estimated \$15 billion in health care spending annually. Caregivers face stress and burnout every day. They need respite, support groups, and education so they can care for loved ones safely at home.
- \$6.8 million in service dollars cut from NYSOFA's Local Program Assistance Funding in August of 2008, on top of the \$1,725,000 in cuts reflected in the 2008-09 Enacted Budget (as compared to Executive Budget), has reduced seniors' access to care and resulted in waiting lists for home delivered meals, case management, and home care as economic hardship worsens.
- Continue funding at August 2008 levels to avoid removing more services from frail senior citizens.

Priority One **Funding for SNAP at August 2008 Level of \$21,592,210**
(\$1,616,790 less than the \$23,209,000 in 2008-09 Executive Budget)

This would allow Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to provide meals to seniors already receiving them. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was created in 1984 and provides nutritious meals and related services to frail, homebound seniors at high nutritional risk, enabling them to remain in the community.

Priority Two **Funding for EISEP at August 2008 Level of \$46,486,742**
(\$3,485,258 less than the \$49,972,000 in the 2008-09 Executive Budget & SFY 2007-08)

The Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) provides case management and home care services that enable the most vulnerable seniors to remain safely at home. By delaying institutional care and reducing Medicaid spending, EISEP saves taxpayers' money and improves seniors' quality of life.

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Priority Three

Funding for CSE at August 2008 Level of \$15,485,498

(\$1,135,502 less than the \$16,621,000 in 2008-09 Executive Budget & SFY 2007-08)

Established in 1979, the Community Services for the Elderly program (CSE) provides non-medical community-based services to frail, low-income seniors helping them to remain at home. The program offers flexible service options to meet unique needs of senior citizens.

Priority Four

Continue and Make Permanent COLA Funds for CSE, EISEP and SNAP

The Association supports continuing and making permanent the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for three programs:

- Community Services for Elderly (CSE) program
- Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The COLA has enabled Area Agencies on Aging to maintain services and recruit and retain workers. As energy and transportation costs spiral upward, COLA funds help the Area Agencies on Aging maintain existing services.

Priority Five

Continue NY Connects Choices for Long Term Care Services Funding

The Association supports the Department of Health's NY Connects Program. NY Connects provides comprehensive and easily accessible information and assistance for consumers of all ages seeking long term care services. NY Connects helps consumers remain in community-based settings and avoid over utilization of institutional care.

Priority Six

Transportation Operating Expenses at August 2008 Level of \$1,864,031

(\$135,969 less than the \$2 million for SFY 2007-08)

The availability of transportation allows seniors to attend congregate meal programs, receive home delivered meals and attend medical appointments. Dramatic increases in operational costs (fuel, insurance and driver compensation) have restricted the ability of local transportation programs to continue to assist seniors.

Priority Seven

Association Proposal for "Options Counseling" Program – Combine HIICAP and LTCIEOP with Funding at August 2008 Level of \$3,692,807

(\$307,193 less than the \$4 million in 2008-09 Executive Budget & SFY 2007-08)

The Association recommends an "Options Counseling" program, combining the existing HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling & Assistance Program) with LTCIEOP (Long Term Care Insurance Education & Outreach Program), resulting in a coordinated program providing valuable Medicare Part D and Long Term Care Insurance counseling to enable seniors to make informed choices among complicated plans and programs.

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