



**AREA AGENCIES ON AGING
ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN**

Testimony to House Appropriation Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

Representative Mary Whiteford, Chairperson

March 9, 2020

Representative Whiteford and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is David LaLumia and I am the Executive Director of the Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan. Sixteen Area Agencies on Aging serve seniors and persons with disabilities in all 83 Michigan counties.

The "aging network" is a federal, state, and local partnership that includes the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Administration on Aging (AOA). At the state level, our partners the Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) develops and administers the state plan on aging and coordinates activities related to the purposes of the Older Americans Act of 1965 and the Older Michiganians Act of 1981. Appointed by the Governor, the MI Commission on Services to the Aging approves the state plan on aging and reviews and approves the expenditure of federal and state funds related to these laws.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) are a key component of the aging network. Created by amendments to the Older Americans Act in 1973, they promote healthy aging, dignity and independence by offering a continuum of home and community-based supports and services, information and assistance to senior and their families, help for Medicaid beneficiaries to remain in their homes and local communities, an extensive home delivered and congregate meal program and support for caregivers. Finally, the aging network consists of more than 1,300 service providers that directly deliver this array of supports and services to more than 250,000 seniors and persons with disabilities across the state.

Area Agencies on Aging are a significant presence in every county and community.

- Last year (2018) they provided over 107,000 hours of conflict free options counseling, information and assistance and resource referrals to older adults and their caregivers.
- They delivered more than 10,300,000 home delivered and congregate meals.
- AAA served 15,000 persons in the MI Choice waiver program. These are Medicaid beneficiaries who are nursing facility eligible. The waiver program provides an array of home and community-based services aimed at supporting persons in their own homes.

- They support more than 7,000 caregivers through education and training, adult day care, in home respite care, meals and other supports and services.

The Association has several specific recommendations regarding the FY2021 executive budget:

1. The proposed supplemental appropriations bill for the current (FY2020) fiscal year removes \$40.5 million from the Medicaid home and community-based waiver line item in the budget. The funding was included in the budget as passed and was intended to address waiting lists for the MI Choice waiver program. Please oppose removing this funding from the budget and urge that MDHHS allocate this funding to add waiver slots in the current year (FY2020) to address waiting lists.
2. The FY2021 budget contains a \$20.3 million item to create a conflict free options counseling capacity. AAA already do extensive options counseling and are conflict free in so doing. We oppose this item because it creates a duplicate administrative structure and adds 4 Medicaid staff positions. We urge that this item be removed from the FY2021 budget and that this new funding be designated to address waiting lists for waiver services.
3. We urge that the \$40.5 million appropriated in the current (FY2020) budget be added to the FY2021 budget to continue to reduce waiting lists and to support individuals in their homes and local communities.
4. We support the recommendations of the Silver Key Coalition to expand state funding for in-home supports and services for Michigan's aging population and persons with disabilities.

The demographics of our aging population continue to send a compelling message about the need to expand the network of aging services.

- 10,000 U.S. citizens turn 65 years of age every day.
- Michigan has 2.4 million adults age 60 and over. 24.4% of the population.
- There is a 2.6% annual growth in the number of persons 60 years of age and older.
- Based on median age, Michigan ranks 40th among states from younger to older.

We ask for your support in keeping our aging network strong. We must expand if we are to keep pace with a growing aging population. We ask for your support for our budget recommendations and we appreciate your interest and advocacy on behalf of Michigan seniors.

Respectfully Submitted,



David LaLumia

Executive Director

Area Agency on Aging Association of Michigan

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