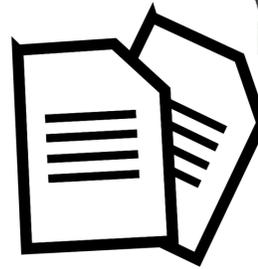


June 15, 2016

Aging Advocacy Day 2016



Plan to Reform State's Adult Long-Term Care System Needs More Work

Ten weeks after the state Department of Health Services (DHS) submitted their Family Care/IRIS 2.0 Concept Paper to the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) for approval, the department made the decision to withdraw the approval request.

Since submission of the concept paper, DHS has received comments, questions, and feedback from consumers, advocates, providers, and legislators on the approaches taken in Family Care/IRIS 2.0 to achieve the reforms outlined in Act 55 (2015-'17 Biennial Budget). The JFC had not yet convened to take action on the proposal and several members of the committee indicated it may be months before they did so.

While aging advocates agreed with DHS on a number of important aspects of the new program, questions and concerns remained regarding crucial design elements such as the plan to transition to the new program, shifting from non-profit providers to for-profit insurers, and dividing the state into three administrative zones (likely forcing all/most existing Family Care members to give up their current Managed Care Organization).

Aging advocates remain committed to working with DHS staff and legislators on further quality, coordination, and cost-effectiveness improvements to ensure a high quality, sustainable long-term care system for older adults and people with disabilities.



(Aging advocates gather at the state Capitol before heading out to meet with their legislators and legislative staff.)

On May 18, over 50 advocates gathered at the Capitol to participate in the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's (WAAN) first Aging Advocacy Day. Advocates spent the morning in the beautiful North Hearing Room participating in training on the aging network's state advocacy priorities and tips for effectively communicating with their state legislators. After a quick lunch and photo shoot, they were off to legislative office visits. WAAN issue brief packets were delivered to all 132 legislative offices. Issue briefs can be viewed at: <http://gwaar.org/waan>. Check back periodically as additional issue briefs will be added as they are completed.

WAAN looks forward to building on the energy and excitement generated this year to make this a growing annual event every May in recognition of Older Americans Month.

Aging Advocacy Day 2017 is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 17! Mark your calendars and watch for updates. Let's work on filling up the Capitol Rotunda with advocates next year!

Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia Releases Final Report

On June 14, 2016, the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia submitted their final report to Speaker Vos. The report summarizes the work of the Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia, including a description of each of the public hearings conducted by the task force, legislation introduced by the task force, and recommendations for future legislative action.

To view the full report, go to:

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/committees/assembly/ad/media/1079/speakers-task-force-on-alzheimers-and-dementia-report.pdf>



U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee Releases FY 2017 Spending Bill for Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies

Last week the Senate Appropriations Committee (of which Senator Tammy Baldwin from Wisconsin is a member) considered and approved a bill to fund the Departments of Labor, Health, and Human Services (HHS); Education; and related agencies (Labor-HHS) for FY 2017. Among other workforce, education, health, and social service programs, this bill sets discretionary spending levels for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs.

No significant funding increases were anticipated for aging programs in FY 2017, as the Bipartisan Budget Agreement passed last fall had already raised the budget caps for FY 2016 & 2017 above what had been set in the 2011 Budget Control Act; near equal funding was anticipated from one year to the next. However, when the Senate set actual funding levels for the 12 appropriations subcommittees, Labor-HHS programs received funding levels slightly lower than FY 2016.

Three aging services programs were targeted for significant cuts. The Senate Appropriations Committee **cut all funding for the**

Medicare State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) which helps fund Wisconsin's Medigap Helpline, Medicare counseling provided by benefit specialists, and education/benefits assistance through the Indian Law Office of Wisconsin Judicare. After giving OAA Title VI Native American programs a much needed funding boost last year, **Senator Appropriators cut FY 2017 funding for Title VI Native American Nutrition and Supportive Services by 16%.** Lastly, **funding for the OAA Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)—** which provides subsidized, service-based training for low-income people 55 and older who are unemployed—**was reduced by 8%.**

Core OAA programs—Title III B supportive services, III C congregate and home-delivered meals, III D preventive health, and III E national family caregiver support services - **were all level-funded at FY 2016 amounts.** Also level-funded were Title VII Ombudsman program, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Senior Corps (RSVP, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companions), **falls prevention activities and chronic disease self-management education.**

Highlights of the bill include increases of \$2 million for elder justice programs (to prevent and respond to elder abuse), **\$2 million for Senior Medicare Patrol, and \$400 million for Alzheimer's disease research** at the National Institute on Aging. For more information on the Senate budget, go to:

- *NCOA Aging Program Funding Table*
<https://www.ncoa.org/resources/federal-budget-fy17-aging-program-funding-table/>
- *n4a Appropriations Chart*
http://www.n4a.org/files/Senate%20Labor%20HHS%206_9_16.pdf

The House Appropriations Committee has not yet taken action on a funding bill. Contact your U.S. Representative and Senators Baldwin and Johnson today and let them know how these funding levels affect people and programs in your community!