

CCoA
California Commission on Aging

AGEWATCH

Congress approves FY 2012 Older Americans Act Funding

Older Americans Act (OAA) funding will remain essentially unchanged in the coming year, thanks to Congress's mid-December passage of FY12 appropriations bills. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 contained nine appropriations bills that fund a wide range of programs through September 30th, including the Older Americans Act and other aging service programs.

The \$1.47 billion OAA budget leaves funding levels untouched for supportive services, congregate and home delivered meals, nutrition services, preventive health and Native American senior programs, among others. The new budget eliminates Title IV program innovation funding, which includes support for multigenerational civic engagement, national resource centers, community innovations for aging in place and the National Alzheimer's Call Center. The budget also contains a \$7.4 million (65%) reduction in funding for Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration projects and an increase in the AoA Administration budget of \$3.2 million.



Yenlin Li, left, helps serve lunch at the Rio Vista Senior Center in Solano County. (photo: Brad Zweerink/Daily Republic)

Congress rejected the Obama Administration's request for an additional \$40 million for the National Family Caregiver Support Program, \$48 million for supportive services and senior centers and \$7.5 million for Lifespan Respite Care funding. Congress also rejected the transfer of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) to the Administration on Aging and a request for new funding for the Elder Justice Act.

Information provided by NCOA Week, December 20, 2011.

AGEWATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834. (916) 419-7591

www.ccoa.ca.gov

Brown Administration Moves Forward to Implement \$623 Million in MediCal Provider Reductions

California Department of Health Care Services (CDHCS) announced in December that it will implement retroactive budget trigger cuts of up to 10% in Medi-Cal provider payments for the current fiscal year to save \$623 million in State general fund dollars. The reduction comes as the State faces still another huge budget deficit, projected at nearly \$13 billion by the end of 2012-2013, unless the Governor and Legislature take action to address the shortfall either through additional spending cuts, realizing new revenues or a combination of both.

Despite federal approval in late October of California's request to make the reductions, the Department of Health Care Services postponed its announcement until after a December 19th federal district court hearing on a lawsuit seeking to block some of those reductions. In the first of two December 28th rulings, the federal courts blocked 10% rate reductions to MediCal pharmacies. The second ruling prohibits the State from applying the 10% reduction to hospital-based skilled nursing facilities.

Pharmacies and hospital-based skilled nursing facilities were among the providers exempted from the reduction in the December CDHCS announcement. The Department also exempted services provided by contract inpatient facilities, Federally Qualified Health Centers and rural health centers, breast and cervical cancer detection programs, and hospice, among others.

The retroactive reductions will have a devastating impact on many MediCal providers already reeling from previous reductions, according to advocates for seniors and persons with disabilities. Those providers include physicians and clinics serving children and adults, home health agencies, adult day health (through February 12, 2012), and specified outpatient services. Over 2.5 million people in the MediCal "fee for service" program will be impacted by the 10% reduction. CDHCS reported earlier this month that about 18% of that total enrollees in the "fee for service" program are people with disabilities and just under 4% are persons 65 years or older.

Excerpted from the CDCAN Disability Rights Report issues #208-2011 - December 23, 2011 and #209-2011 - December 28, 2011.

Older Californians with disabilities struggle to remain at home as public programs lose funding -- Pending budget cuts could jeopardize health, safety of state's most vulnerable

California's low-income seniors with disabilities are struggling to remain in their homes as public funding for long-term care services shrinks and the prospect of further cuts, according to a new study by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research conducted with support from The SCAN Foundation.

Looking ahead to the prospect of up to \$100 million in additional cuts to California's In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) through State Budget trigger cuts, the report predicts that seniors with disabilities will lose crucial support systems that allow them to remain safely in their homes and out of nursing homes. This vulnerable group could face a 20 % reduction paid caregiver hours, on top of cuts already enacted earlier this year.

The IHSS trigger reductions were made potentially moot with release of the Governor's 2012-2013 budget proposal on January 5. The proposal would eliminate all domestic and related services for IHSS recipients who live with someone who is not also an IHSS recipient. The change requires approval by the Legislature, which the Governor has requested by March 2012.

Excerpted from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research brief Independence at Risk: Older Californians with disabilities struggle to remain home as public supports shrink. To read the full report, visit www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu and CDCAN Disability Rights Report #004-2012.

Senior Center Innovation Book Posted

The California Commission on Aging (CCoA) publication *innovation ° resourcefulness ° persistence -- How California Senior Centers are meeting today's challenge* is now posted on the Commission on Aging website. The book is a compilation of programs and innovations from senior centers across California. Researched and compiled by the CCoA staff and published with funding from the SCAN Health Plan, the publication's contents were gathered through a call for senior centers to self-nominate, from Area Agency on Aging referrals, and from staff solicitations.

The goals of this project were to honor the important work that senior centers do in the state and to inspire similar innovation in other centers. The vignettes cover topics ranging from health and wellness, collaboration and fund-raising to governance and advocacy. The publication presents the work of 50 centers in locations as remote as California's far northwestern corner to the urban core of Los Angeles.

Released at the CCoA's second Statewide Senior Center Stakeholder Forum in Los Angeles on November 14, 2011, the CCoA/SCAN HP publication is a first-in-the nation look at how senior centers are responding to challenging economic times. The book highlights the diversity of California's centers and the good work they do, and continues CCoA's five-year commitment to strengthening the senior center network in California.

Additional copies of *innovation ° resourcefulness ° persistence -- How California Senior Centers are meeting today's challenge* can be obtained by contacting the Commission at ccoa@cco.ca.gov.



A project of the California Commission on Aging with funding from SCAN Health Plan®

Senior Center Forum Materials Available on the CCoA Website

Materials from the November 2011 Senior Center Stakeholder Forum are now available on the Commission on Aging website (www.ccoa.ca.gov). The materials include summaries from the day's breakout session and Power-Point presentations from many of the presenters. CCoA has also posted photos from the day-long event, as well as the senior center innovations book *innovation ° resourcefulness ° persistence -- How California Senior Centers are meeting today's challenge*.



Manoj Pardasani PhD, captures the audience's imagination during the forum plenary session.

Response to the event, which was co-sponsored by CCoA and the Congress of California Seniors, was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees surveyed at the close of the event congratulated the sponsors for the day's success, calling the information presented "inspiring" and thanking event organizers for showing both "big picture thinking and attention to detail."

Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal (L) and Joyce Hayes pictured with the Senior Center Month Resolution Lowenthal presented at the event.



Volunteers like ET Thomas (below L) and Susan Clifton helped make the day a success.



California Commission on Aging

Bert Bettis, Chair
Wilton

Karen Josephson, Vice Chair
Long Beach

Commissioners

Donna Benton
Los Angeles

Constance Chang
Oakland

Rafael Cosio
West Hollywood

Jim Davis
Eureka

Michael DeNunzio
Walnut Creek

Lucille Fisher
San Francisco

Henry "Hank" Lacayo
Newbury Park

Marian Last
Rossmoor

Richard Lundin
Benicia

Barbara Mitchell
Riverside

Sharon Monck
Rio Vista

Havard L. Staggs
Jackson

Donna Ueland
Fresno

Virgie Walker
Carson

Raising the Conversation About Caregiving

Turning the "rigors of caregiving into a kitchen-table issue" is the subject of a December 20, 2011 article in the New York Times. The goal of the "Conversation Project" is to establish a forum for an open and frank discussion of caregiver concerns and to move the conversation into the public debate. Developed by Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Ellen Goodman, the Conversation Project operates out of the Massachusetts-based Institute for Healthcare Improvement and will hold a free webcast on the topic on January 26. Information on the webcast can be found at

<http://www.ihl.org/offerings/virtualprograms/wihi/Pages/default.aspx>.

Similar efforts to address the issues of caregiving and long-term care are underway. Dr. Joanne Lynn, director of the Center on Elder Care and Advanced Illness at the Altarum Institute, is putting together a roundtable of women to discuss the frustrations of caregivers and the fact that caregiving is all too often a women's issue. The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (C-TAC), is the creation of former AARP head Bill Novelli, and is intended to "empower consumers" and to push for "delivery system and policy changes."

To read the NY Times article, go to <http://nyti.ms/slRKGy>.

Public Policy & Aging Report -- America's Opportunity: The Potential Of An Aging Society

The fall 2011 issue of *Public Policy & Aging Report* (PPAR), is dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging. Over the years, the committee has called attention to pressing needs facing older Americans. Articles describe the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The issue is supported in part by The SCAN Foundation. To read the PPAR fall 2011 issue, "America's Opportunity: The Potential of an Aging Society," please visit www.thescanfoundation.org and click on the "Publications" link.

Reprinted from The SCAN Foundation website.

Upcoming Events

February 8-9, 2012 – Triple-A Council of California Meeting (Sacramento) --

www.4tacc.org

February 21-22, 2012 – California Commission on Aging Meeting (Elk Grove)

AGEWATCH

January, 2012

California Commission on Aging staff:
Sandra Fitzpatrick, M.A., Executive Director
Carol Sewell, Program Analyst on Aging
Marcella Lopez, Administrative Assistant