



# Connecticut Commission on Aging

An Independent, Nonpartisan Office of the Connecticut General Assembly



## Update: New State Budget Affects Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (10/5/09)

*This update is provided as part of the Commission on Aging's ongoing mission to educate policymakers and stakeholders about emerging issues affecting older adults in CT.*

The FY '10-'11 budget, which became law on September 8, 2009, includes the following items impacting older adults and persons with disabilities (For more information, see HB 6802 and HB 7005):

- The **Connecticut Commission on Aging** was retained, but with a 53% reduction in funding and standardized statutes for all legislative Commissions.
- **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** received a 20% reduction in funding.
- **Long-Term Care Providers:** Rates to providers were not increased, and nursing homes will not receive statutory rebasing or fair rent adjustments.
- **Money Follows the Person:** The administration has agreed to change the operating protocol for Money Follows the Person, bringing in an estimated \$11 million in additional federal funds. Establishment of the Long-Term Care Reinvestment Account has been delayed to July 1, 2011.
- **Assisted Living:** The budget implementer includes a provision to allow CT to receive more federal funding for community-based living. The Assisted Living Conversion Program, run through HUD, provides federal funding to low-income congregate housing facilities to convert to assisted living. The implementer changes state statutes to allow new federal funds to come to Connecticut for more conversions of these facilities.
- **Falls Prevention:** The Falls Prevention program will receive \$500,000 in state funding in each year of the biennium and will be funded through the Insurance Fund.
- **CT Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE):**
  - Cost sharing will increase under the state-funded portion of the CHCPE. Failure to pay this fee will render participants ineligible for services; and,
  - Personal Care Assistants will now be a covered service under the CHCPE and the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, providing flexibility and lower-cost alternatives in these programs.

The Commission on Aging focuses its efforts on **achieving efficiencies** in state government and systems and in **maximizing federal funds** to our state.

A few 2009 highlights (details on this fact sheet):

- **Money Follows the Person** operating protocol change, that will bring in up to \$11 million in new federal funds

- Change in state statutes to allow additional **assisted living** in low-income congregate housing, using all new federal funds

- **Falls Prevention** program, which saves the Medicaid program millions of dollars and improves quality of life

- Continued work to **streamline state systems** to increase efficiency and eliminate duplication

- **Medicaid Managed Care:** The budget includes savings attributed to moving older adults and individuals with disabilities into Medicaid managed care (as opposed to fee-for-service). Advocates are concerned that these “Special Needs Plans” will restrict access to care, while proponents believe care will be better coordinated between Medicare and Medicaid.
- **Medical Necessity:** The definition of medical necessity under Medicaid will be changed, which could restrict access to prescriptions, durable medical equipment and other needed services. An oversight committee is established to advise on the amended definition.
- **Medicare Part D Wrap-Around/Dually-Eligibles:** Funding was severely cut for the Medicare Part D Wrap-Around. Dually-eligible (Medicaid and Medicare) individuals will be expected to pay up to \$15/month in copayments.
- **ConnPACE:**
  - The new ConnPACE Plus program will maximize federal funds and save consumers money without reducing services—by expanding the eligibility requirements for the Low-Income Subsidy program of Medicare to match those of ConnPACE;
  - Income limits will be frozen at the 2009 level until 2012 (\$25,100 for singles; \$33,800 for married couples); and,
  - Annual enrollment for ConnPACE will increase from \$30 to \$45 and enrollment must occur within 31 days of eligibility or during annual open enrollment period.
- **Department on Aging:** After its fourth delay, the State Department on Aging is now slated to be established July 1, 2010.
- **Transportation:** The municipal matching grant for demand responsive transportation was retained.