



Update: Program Changes Affecting Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities

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. 12/7/09

Due to the state's fiscal situation, administrative decisions have been made recently that are not reflective of budget decisions made by the legislature. Some of these changes are:

- **Alzheimer's Respite Care:** This state-funded program offers relief to stressed caregivers by providing information, support, the development of an appropriate plan of care, and services for the individual with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. DSS closed intake on May 11. **Although sufficient funding was included in the state budget to re-open this program, Secretary Genuario recently indicated that this program will not be re-opened due to the state fiscal crisis.** The Alzheimer's Respite Care program now has a waitlist of 265 people.
- **Falls Prevention:** The biennial budget includes \$500,000 in each year for a comprehensive, evidence-based falls prevention program. **However, Secretary Genuario recently indicated that this program will not receive any funding due to the state fiscal crisis.**

Certain budgetary decisions are now being implemented and affecting thousands of older adults across the state. These include:

- **Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders:** The budget requires a 15% copayment for individuals on the state-funded portion of this program. This copayment will average \$136/month per individual. Failure to pay will result in immediate discontinuation of services. Some legal authorities have questioned the constitutionality of having no appeals process.
- **ConnPACE:** The budget institutes a number of changes to the ConnPACE program. Among them, new ConnPACE applicants will have a restricted enrollment period coinciding with that of Medicare (11/15-12/31 annually). This condensed timeframe will cause difficulty for consumers and is causing a backlog of applications. (Unfortunately this increased demand coincides with eliminated state funding to the CHOICES* program and also with strained budgets of senior centers and other related municipal offices). Consumers will also have additional restrictions on which medications ConnPACE will cover. DSS has begun informing ConnPACE recipients of their potential eligibility for the "ConnPACE Plus" program, which links ConnPACE and Medicare Savings Programs. For an OLR summary of recent changes to ConnPACE, click [here](#).
- **Community-Based Services:** This program, funded through the Social Services Block Grant, provides homemaker-companion services, case management, counseling, adult day care, meals, transportation and other services designed to help individuals aged 18-64 maintain success in the community, usually while they await eligibility determination for other, more comprehensive programs. DSS closed intake on May 11 and reduced services to current enrollees on June 15, 2009. This program remains closed and has a wait list of 59 people.

**The CHOICES program is a cooperative program of DSS, Area Agencies on Aging, and the Center for Medicare Advocacy that provides information about services and supports including Medicare Part D and ConnPACE.*

For more information, please contact the CoA at 860-240-5200.

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**Working at the State Capitol and beyond
to ensure a brighter future for our state and
for older adults of today and tomorrow.**



Update: Programs and Services Affecting Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities Targeted in the Governor's Deficit Mitigation Plan

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A number of programs and services have been recommended for cuts through the Governor's Deficit Mitigation Plan (November, 2009). Some of these changes are:

- Complete **elimination of all legislative commissions**, the budgets of which have already been cut by more than 50%;
- Continuation of **closed enrollment and now with a funding reduction for the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program**;
- Reduced support for **elderly nutrition and home-delivered meals**;
- Elimination of **coverage of eyeglasses** for individuals receiving Medicaid;
- Elimination of **coverage of nonemergency dental care** for adults in Medicaid and SAGA;
- Elimination of **coverage of nonformulary drugs under the Medicare Part D Supplemental Needs Fund**;
- Elimination of **coverage of over-the-counter drugs under Medicaid**;
- Imposition of a required **copayment for low-income older adults** and persons with disabilities on Medicaid;
- **Restriction of certain mental health drugs**, by requiring them to be on the Preferred Drug List;
- **Increased Medicare Part D copayment requirements** for low-income individuals on both Medicare and Medicaid ("dual-eligibles");
- **Reduced provider rates** for Medicaid providers, including nursing homes, and no increase for **adult day centers**, which provide needed respite for caregivers;
- Reduced support for **Independent Living Centers**, which help individuals with disabilities thrive in community settings;
- Elimination of a **training program for LPNs**, necessary for the workforce of the future; and,
- **Reduced employment opportunities and day programs** for persons with developmental disabilities.

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