



*Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on
Aging Representing:
Agency on Aging of South Central CT
North Central Area Agency on Aging
Western CT Area Agency on Aging
Senior Resources - Agency on Aging Eastern CT
Southwestern CT Agency on Aging*

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
February 22, 2013**

The CT Association of Area Agencies on Aging fully understands and appreciates that the breadth and scope of Connecticut’s budget crisis requires mitigation efforts however unpleasant they may be. That said, we would like to share our views on some of the specific items identified in the governor’s budget.

Expanding Eligibility for the Alzheimer’s Disease Respite Care Program

In 2012 The CT Statewide Respite Care program provided short term respite care to 839 clients and their caregivers. These services enable family caregivers struggling with the ravages of Alzheimers Disease to work, to attend to their own health needs, and to continue to provide cost-effective care in the community in lieu skilled nursing care. 93% of our consumers were able to remain at home during some portion of the Program year. 84% of our consumers were able to remain home for the entire program year. And 89% stated that the program was effective in improving the caregiver and client’s quality of life and reducing caregiver stress. Unfortunately, the most significant challenge facing the Statewide Respite Program is not narrow eligibility but rather the insufficient funding.

The CT Statewide Respite Program has already sustained a 5% cut as a result of the Governor’s recissions of 2012 which have effectively reduced our allocation and our ability to serve clients in need.

So, while we are gratified to see that the CT Respite Program continues to garner attention and has become a valuable part of CT’s community-based services menu, we do not wish to perpetuate any false notion that expanded eligibility will have a significant impact on utilization.

Elimination of the Centers for Independent Living from the Governor’s Budget

C4A asks that the committee strongly consider the wisdom of any proposal that increases the probability of nursing facility admissions, adds to the ranks of “safety net” consumers, perpetuates chronic underemployment, and prevents successful community living for individuals with disabilities. Removing the state funding for Connecticut’s five Centers for Independent Living the Governor’s budget does exactly that. The Centers for Independent Living are integral partners to many of the state’s current Medicaid Rebalancing Efforts including Money Follows the Person. Furthermore, the Centers have provided the peer support and skills training necessary

for the long-term success of individuals transitioned under MFP. The Centers are founding partners in the statewide Aging and Disability Resource Center movement and by their presence ensure full cooperation and collaboration of agencies and programs across the lifespan. One would be not be wrong to question Connecticut's commitment to the concepts of *Aging in Place* and *Livable Communities* if the Centers for Independent Living are completely eliminated from the state's budget. We all know the adage: Actions speak louder than words.

The elimination of the CT Commission on Aging

C4A had the privilege to present in support of the Commission on Aging at the Public Hearing on Tuesday and will take this opportunity to briefly reprise those sentiments. We ask the Committee to please remember that the Commission on Aging and the State Department on Aging are functionally completely different. The Governor's rationale for the elimination of the Commission is based on this false premise of redundancy. We strongly urge you to reject the elimination of the CT Commission on Aging. Now is the time to recognize and invest in our assets, not squander them.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Young, Chairman C4A

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