

**Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Providers (CANASP)**  
**Testimony to the Appropriations Committee regarding the Governor's budget proposals**  
**under the State Department of Aging**  
**February 11, 2016**

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Lisa LaBonte and I am here tonight to speak representing New Opportunities, Inc. Senior Nutrition Program and on behalf of the Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers CANASP, the 9 regional providers of Elderly Nutrition Programs (ENPs) throughout the state of Connecticut.

We are here tonight to discuss the risk that Meals on Wheels programs face statewide due longstanding underfunding. I represent a program that had to put \$40,000 of fundraising money into my Ct Home Care meal budget to prevent a deficit. These are funds that should be going towards our federal Title IIIC budget that serves seniors 60 and older who are not eligible for the CT Home Care Program. The federal Title III program in my region currently has a waiting list of approximately 40 people. While over the last several years, most of our financial difficulties have been with our CT Home Care Program funded meals, this year with the Governor's budget proposal, we fear the Title III meals, funded through the Older Americans Act under the State Department on Aging, are at risk as well. This account has been consolidated with other accounts under SDA, and that new large account is subject to the 5.75% cut proposed by the Governor. While we do not know yet whether Meals on Wheels would be affected by this cut, with little information we have to assume the worst in a budget climate such as this. Fundraising efforts by Elderly Nutrition Programs have always been used to address waiting lists however they are now being used to keep the Program funded under the CT Home Care Program from going out of business. I fear now we will have to worry about both programs in the state. Elderly Nutrition Programs across the state are facing similar problems.

This is a program that provides a basic need that keeps people healthy and safe in their own home for a very low cost when considering the alternative. Rather than provide you with facts and statistics that my colleagues will likely provide in their testimony I would like to read the testimony from actual clients who receive the service and volunteers who have daily contact with the seniors who receive the service.

**I am Mary Williams, 75 years old and live in Waterbury.**

Meals on Wheels is a program that has helped me a lot. Through the meals on wheels program, I have gained access to adequate food, as well as milk and bread. Going to the store is very hard for me, and therefore without the meals from Meals on Wheels, I would not be able to eat the foods I need in order to stay as healthy as I can. Financially, Meals on Wheels is a major help to

me as well. Through Meals on Wheels, I have also been given the chance to develop a relationship with my driver. The driver I have is very friendly and kind. He is a great person and has made my experience in the program that much more enjoyable.

**I am Ausra Lopas, 80 years old and live in Southbury**

Meals on Wheels is a program that provides me with food. If I didn't have Meals on Wheels, I would not only be hungry, but lonely. Within the past few years my daughter moved. When my daughter moved, I became very lonely, and lost the one who cared for me by making sure I had food to eat. I am a woman who is often sick, and therefore am homebound with no way to get food, and no one to help me. I am grateful for the services I have received, and hope that this can continue as without Meals on Wheels, I have no support.

**To Whom it May Concern,**

I've been a volunteer for MOW in Heritage Village, Southbury for 5 years and have seen how important it is to the recipients. So many are shut-ins and waiting by the door in their wheelchairs or walkers. They depend on us not only for the meal, but for help in other areas when we get to know each other. Install new batteries in door bells, take out recyclables & garbage, mail letters. We also notice safety problems. I was putting a meal in the fridge and saw newspapers piled up on the stove over the elements. She said she only used the ones on the other side. A fire extinguisher .dated 1986. Burning newspapers in fireplace that hadn't had chimney cleaned in 15 years.

I always leave my phone number, and respond on week-ends to assist them.

It seems a shame that 40 needy people are on a waiting list which we could help.

Sincerely,

Doug Dallon  
Meals on Wheels Volunteer