

**Meals on Wheels & CANASP
Testimony to the Aging Committee
February 19, 2019
HB 7072: An Act Increasing Funding for Elderly Nutrition Services**

Good morning Senator Maroney, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Joel Sekorski and I am here to speak on behalf of the Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers (CANASP), which is comprised of the nine regional providers of Elderly Nutrition Programs (ENPs) throughout the state.

I am here to offer my testimony in support of HB 7072. We appreciate your continued recognition of the problems that nearly stagnant funding has caused Connecticut's Meals on Wheels Programs. It is evident that you understand the importance of community based services like Meals on Wheels and the positive impact that those services have on keeping seniors healthy and independent in their own homes.

Meals on Wheels programs continue to operate in an economy that has experienced a CPI increase exceeding 14% since 2007. At the 2018 reimbursement rate, ENPs have experienced a loss of nearly \$1.2M statewide between the cost of meals and the reimbursement received.

The attached table shows all of the ENP meals served, the cost of those meals, the reimbursement rates, and the shortfalls between the two. ENPs are struggling to fill that gap through fundraising initiatives and municipal support, but those fixes are limited as costs continue rising to unsustainable levels.

A 10% increase in CHCPE meals would bring the reimbursement for single meals to \$5.32 and \$9.73 for a two-pack – a total cost to the state of under \$600,000, based on the 75,932 single meals and 638,271 double meals that the state's ENPs delivered in 2017.

Meals on Wheels provides a vital service for older Americans nationwide, many of whom are low-income. The meals we provide enable seniors to remain in their homes, benefiting them by preserving their independence and benefiting the state by saving funds that would otherwise be used for more expensive institutional care. Not only do delivered meals ensure that our seniors are eating nutritious foods regularly, they also offer personal contact which is essential to older adults living alone in their community. Half of all persons at and over the age of 85 need assistance with instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), including obtaining and preparing food. Meals on Wheels serves to address those needs.

Further, many of the most common chronic conditions – hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis – can be prevented or risk-reduced with proper nutrition. Among Medicare beneficiaries, those with multiple chronic conditions are the heaviest users of healthcare services; because the prevalence of multiple chronic conditions is higher among home-delivered meal recipients than for the general Medicare population, the provision of healthy meals and nutrition counseling is important to helping such individuals avoid more serious and more costly medical care. Access to healthy meals is essential to the wellbeing of Connecticut's senior population and beneficial to the state's fiscal position in the long-run.

Thank you for raising this very important bill, and for your support of this crucial program and the senior citizens that rely on it.

CHCPE 2017

ENP	2 Pack Reimbursement	Nutrition cost per	Differential	meals served 2pk	Differential	Reimbursement
Litchfield Hills / LHNW	\$8.85	\$11.76	(2.91)	30,352	(\$88,324.32)	
New Opportunities	\$8.85	\$9.75	(0.90)	167,603	(\$150,842.70)	
Catholic Charities	\$8.85	\$13.23	(4.38)	72,356	(\$316,919.28)	
LifeBridge	\$8.85	\$10.89	(2.04)	18,978	(\$38,715.12)	
CWR	\$8.85	\$9.29	(0.44)	223,500	(\$98,340.00)	
CRT Combined	\$8.85	\$12.32	(3.47)	67,559	(\$234,429.73)	
TVCCA	\$8.85	\$10.53	(1.68)	51,119	(\$85,879.92)	
Estuary Council of Sen	\$8.85	\$9.96	(1.11)	6,804	(\$7,552.44)	
			(1.60)	638,271	(\$1,021,003.51)	\$5,648,698.35
	Single Meal Reimbursement	Nutrition Cost per	Differential	Meals served Single	Differential	
New Opportunities	\$4.84	\$7.52	(\$2.68)	2,701	(\$7,238.68)	
LifeBridge	\$4.84	\$8.06	(\$3.22)	12,721	(\$40,961.62)	
CWR	\$4.84	\$5.08	(\$0.24)	35,000	(\$8,400.00)	
Team	\$4.84	\$12.26	(\$7.42)	7,976	(\$59,181.92)	
TVCCA	\$4.84	\$9.33	(\$4.49)	12,963	(\$58,203.87)	
Estuary Council of Sen	\$4.84	\$5.88	(\$1.04)	4,571	(\$4,753.84)	
			(\$2.35)	75,932	(\$178,739.93)	\$367,510.88
Totals= single meals				1,352,474	(\$1,199,743.44)	\$6,016,209.23

Differential equals the amount of money the ENP is responsible to generate in order to run the program at breakeven

Differential does not include Fundraising Dollars or Town Assessment Income

Most of the ENP's are unable to generate the differential and are running at a loss

10% increase to the 2019 rate would bring the reimbursement up to \$9.735 2 pack \$5.32 single, still below actual cost

2pk units 638,271 X 10% \$.88 = \$561,678

Single Units 75,932 X 10% \$.484 = \$ 36,751

Total cost to CT for CHCPE meals 10% increase based on 2016/17 actual service units or 1,352,474 meals served = \$598,429.00

ENP's with large rural areas tend to have the higher cost for delivery but all ENPs have costly challenges specific to their regions

In 2007, there was a 3% COLA increase, however, since that time the consumer price index has risen over 14.5%. CANASP is seeking an

additional 10% increase specifically for Elderly Nutrition/Meals on Wheels.

January 2015 there was a 1% increase across the board for CHCPE (.08 2PK .04 single) About \$66,250.00 per year for the whole State MOW