

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

To the Committee on Aging, my name is Eugene Theroux, Director of Nutrition Services for Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) and a member of the Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers (CANASP) – the nine regional providers of Elderly Nutrition Programs (ENPs) throughout the state, I am here to offer my written testimony in support of HB 7072.

I appreciate your continued recognition of the problems that stagnant funding has adversely affected Connecticut's Meals on Wheels Programs. It is evident that you understand the importance of community based services including 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 13% since 2007. During that same period, our programs have battled level or decreasing funding from their income streams. Statewide providers of the CHCPE Meals on Wheels have faced a shortfall of nearly \$1.2 million this past year.

In addition to CHCPE Meals, Elderly Nutrition Programs such as TVCCA, provide Congregate and home delivered meals through the Title III Older Americans Act which has also been suffering due to level funding for the past eight years. These programs rely on each other for economies of scale and have been making adjustments and cuts to services under the public radar for years despite no decrease in demand.

***Cost Comparisons and Savings***

Below are daily rates that are being charged for Assisted Living Services and Nursing Homes.

Home Care Program rates: There are four levels based on service needs and are roughly: \$24.50, 40.35, 56.82, and 73.16.

The average Medicaid state rate for a nursing home stay is \$234.09 a day, inclusive of room, board and care. 50% of that rate (\$117.05) is paid by the federal government as a match and an additional \$21 a day is paid back to the state by the nursing home through the provider tax.

The average private pay daily rate in a nursing home is \$432.

Meals on Wheels are more than a meal. The program offers a delicious, nutritious and safe meal to our seniors in their homes. Our delivery drivers, both paid and volunteer, deliver meals to our seniors and also provide socialization through human contact, communication / conversation, and a physical wellness check performed by observation, asking how they are feeling and looking for physical hazards in their living space that could cause harm. This simple process can help seniors stay in their homes as long as possible and will reduce the need of premature entry into a supportive care facility. In comparison to more costly alternatives, the state wide average cost per day for a two pack meal that meet 2/3 the RDA and delivered to a client's home was \$13.42 in FY 17/18

Thank you for your support of this crucial program and the senior citizens that rely on it.

Eugene Theroux  
Thames Valley Council for Community Action Inc.  
TVCCA Senior Nutrition Program  
Director of Nutrition Services  
81 Stockhouse Road  
Bozrah, CT 06334