



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

James C. Bridgers, Jr., Ph.D., MBA
Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 26, 2026

TO: Council President, Fani-Gonzalez, Vice President Balcomb, and Members of the County Council

FROM: Patrice L. McGhee, DPA, Chief, Aging & Disability Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrice McGhee".

SUBJECT: Written Testimony_ Support for FY26 Special Appropriation

I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of the proposed **\$1 million FY26 special appropriation** introduced by Health and Human Services Committee Chair Councilmember Sayles and fully supported by the County Executive, Elrich. I thank Councilmember Sayles for her leadership in introducing this special appropriation to address funding shortfalls affecting critical Aging and Disability Services programs. This supplemental funding is urgently needed to stabilize three essential programs serving older adults and individuals with disabilities: **Respite Services, Senior Nutrition, and Home Care Services.**

Montgomery County's population aged 60 and older is projected to grow by **28% by 2045**, compared to just **7.6% for those under 60**. While growth among older adults was even higher over the past decade—**26% in the last 10 years**—the pace is slowing, but it remains significantly faster than for younger populations. At the same time, people with disabilities are living longer. Together, these trends mean that **home- and community-based services are no longer optional—they are essential safety nets** that keep residents safe, independent, and aging in place.

Yet today, instead of accessing those services, far too many older adults and people with disabilities are being told to **wait**. The requested appropriation is necessary to restore and stabilize programs that are already operating at or beyond capacity.

First, **Respite Services**, provides critical supports to unpaid family caregivers—parents, spouses, and adult children—who care for loved ones with complex medical, behavioral, or developmental needs. Demand has risen significantly year-over-year. In FY25 alone, the program served **562 families**, a **19% increase** over the prior year. As of December 2025, **595 families** had already been approved—exceeding last year's total. As a result, we were forced to temporarily close applications on December 17. Without additional funding, caregivers who are already stretched to their limits will continue without relief, increasing the risk of caregiver burnout, health crises, and costly institutional placements. A **\$250,000 investment** will provide more than **7,500 additional hours of respite care** and allow the program to reopen.

Office of the Director

Subject
Date
Page 2 of 2

Second, **Senior Nutrition Program (SNP)** have also reached a critical point. For several years, this program relied on temporary federal COVID-19 relief funds, all of which have now expired. Federal funding has dropped by **65 percent**, while food costs and demand continue to rise. Today, **141 older adults**—and growing—are waiting for meals, and culturally appropriate sites have already experienced significant cuts. Nutrition is foundational to health, independence, and dignity. This appropriation would restore stability and eliminate the newly created waitlist.

Third, **Home Care Services** are similarly strained. At present, **345 residents** are waiting to be assessed for in-home support services that help people bathe, prepare meals, and remain safe in their own homes. These services are not Medicaid-funded services; there is no other safety net. With an investment of **\$300,000**, we can reduce the waitlist, accelerate assessments, and serve **30 to 40 additional residents**, preventing functional decline, deterioration, and unnecessary nursing facility placement.

Taken together, this **\$1 million appropriation** is not simply a budget adjustment; it is a strategic, cost-effective investment to support **aging in place**, caregiver stability, and health equity.

I respectfully request your approval for this special appropriation and appreciate your ongoing leadership and dedication to Montgomery County's older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Many thanks.

JCB:

Subject
Date
Page 3 of 2

Attachment(s)

cc: