



COMMISSION ON AGING

April 4, 2017

FY18 Budget Testimony to the County Council

Good Evening My name is Noelle Heyman, Chair of the COA. The COA appreciates support that the County Council and County Executive provide to seniors through the Senior Agenda and more recently, the Age-Friendly and Dementia Friendly initiatives. We are pleased to support the County Executive's FY'18 Senior Initiative Budget.

These are the items which we requested in our FY'18 priorities statement and other communications, and which are in the CE's budget:

- **Adult Foster Care.** Third and final installment to help reduce the gap between County and State reimbursement rates (\$153,000 for a 3-year total of \$460,000).
- **Adult Protective Services.** Support for two additional full-time positions. (\$213,094 for one social worker and one social worker/supervisor).
- **Affordable senior housing.** 120 units of mixed-income senior rental units; 60 for residents at or below 60% of area median income.

Some Commission priorities are not reflected in the County Executive's FY'18 budget. We ask the Council to consider funding them, to provide additional protection and support for our County's older and most vulnerable residents.

Public Guardianship: (\$99,629 for an additional social worker-HHS)

Public guardianship is a program of last resort for incapacitated adults. Number of clients in public guardianship has increased by 18% in four years – to 78 clients age 65 and older; 36 clients age 18-64.

Adult Foster Care Escorted Transportation - (\$38,000 - HHS)

When an AFC resident requires medical or dental care, manager cannot leave other residents to take the individual to the appointment. As residents age, more such trips are needed. Current funding of \$18,000 is insufficient to serve the current 121 adult foster care clients as they age and need to be transported to more health appointments. Requested funding would add 271 trips per year.

Senior Center Plus/Early Stage Memory Loss – (\$150,000 to establish pilot program – Rec. Dept.)

Structured program tailored to individual needs for senior center participants who have early stage memory loss. Pilot would be implemented by a nonprofit in partnership with HHS and agency Recreation Department at two centers – Layhill/Bel Pre area and Route 29 or Praisner Center.

Department of Health and Human Services

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www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs

Affordable Housing

COA's overarching priority is affordable housing for seniors, including protections for renters, and programs and services to address senior homelessness. We urge the Council to ensure that long-range planning, including innovative solutions for affordable housing, is undertaken for both older adult owned housing and rental housing to ensure a range of safe, affordable housing alternatives.

We recognize the serious challenges presented by proposed reductions in federal funding. With the number of County residents 60 and older increasing by approximately 5,000 each year, the County must continue to support critical programs that permit older adults to live safely in their homes and communities.

Sincerely,


Noelle Heyman, Chair
Commission on Aging