



COMMISSION ON AGING

February 17, 2017

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: FY 2018 Maryland Department of Aging Budget Request

Dear Delegate McIntosh:

I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging, which serves as an advocate for the health, safety and well-being of Montgomery County's older residents. We are pleased to support the transfer in Governor Hogan's FY2018 budget of \$1.2 million from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to the Maryland Department of Aging.

The three programs designated to receive the transferred funds are:

- Senior Care (a \$627,000 increase in FY18 over FY17)
- Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy (a \$462,000 increase in FY18 over FY17)
- Congregate Housing Services Program (a \$106,000 increase in FY18 over FY17).

These programs are designed to reduce nursing home placements by providing our vulnerable elders with high quality, community support services. Senior Care provides a network of services to assist persons who are frail or have disabilities to live independently in their homes. The Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy program provides access to assisted living in small group homes along with the cost of meals, personal care and 24-hour supervision for elderly residents. The Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP) provides subsidies to eligible residents of low and moderate income senior housing who, due to advanced age or chronic health conditions, need daily help with activities such as meals, housekeeping, and personal services.

These programs are not only vital to supporting vulnerable adults in their communities. They are also cost-effective. Take, for example, a 73-year old woman suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, and chronic kidney disease, who continues to live independently in her home with support that she receives through Senior Care. The annual cost of these services is \$7,787, significantly less than the \$72,076 it costs for a nursing home.

Department of Health and Human Services

401 Hungerford Drive, 4th Floor, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 240-777-1120, FAX 240-777-1436.

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs

However, the need for community support services far exceeds the resources available, and the programs must maintain extensive statewide waiting lists. In Montgomery County, the Senior Care Waitlist as of January 31, 2017, was 121, and the Senior Assisted Group Home Subsidy Waitlist as of January 26, 2017, was 72. The FY18 increase to MDoA's budget, once distributed via formula to the localities, will allow many older adults currently on waiting lists to be served.

Senior Care, the Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy, and the Congregate Housing Services Program provide a critical community safety net for vulnerable older Marylanders. We urge you to support the funding increase for these programs set forth in the FY2018 MDoA budget.

Thank you,

Noelle Heyman, Chair
Commission on Aging

cc: Montgomery County Delegation
Secretary Rona Kramer
Leslie Frey
John J. Kenney
Mario Wawrzusin