MEMORANDUM

January 24, 2024

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
         Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
         Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #24-26
         Senior Care Waitlist Reduction ($516,144)

I.   **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that *Supplemental Appropriations #24-26 Senior Care Waitlist Reduction* will advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County as it provides resources to continue funding the Senior Care program, which provides assistance to seniors at risk of nursing home placement to remain in their homes. Funding has the potential to reduce and possibly eliminate the waitlist for services, which are received by seniors who are at 50% of the State median income or below. Therefore, this SA creates an opportunity to advance equitable outcomes for low-income seniors, who, due to historical and systemic factors, are more likely to be Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of SA #24-26 is to use State grant funds to reduce and potentially eliminate the waitlist for Senior Care services. Funds will support contractual services and fund administrative costs to serve waitlist clients. The Senior Care Program provides case management, needs assessment, and gap-filling funds to pay for supportive services to help seniors, meeting eligibility requirements, who are at risk of nursing home placement remain living independently in their own homes[1]. Services include adult day care, medications, transportation, home-delivered meals, medical supplies, medical and

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[1] An individual must be at least 65 years of age, moderately or severely disabled (as defined by a functional assessment score), at risk of institutionalization and must be financially eligible (financial eligibility will be completed at intake).

dental care not covered by insurance, as well as other health needs not covered by other funding sources.[2]

III.   **ANALYSIS**: ORESJ has previously analyzed racial equity and eldercare. Specifically, REIA #23-22 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Older Americans Act Title III Grant. The REIA examined the funding's ability to reach and serve low-income BIPOC aging County residents and connect them to health and social support services. Data provided in the REIA showed approximately 17% of Montgomery County residents are over age 65, and of this group of older adults, approximately 8% lived below the poverty line, with Black, Asian, and Latino older residents being more likely to experience poverty compared to their white counterparts. Our full analysis can be found in the following. https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-22.pdf

A 2020 study by the National Health and Aging Trends identified the following disparities for age 70 and older non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic peers compared to non-Hispanic white persons[3]:

- less likely to successfully accommodate self-care and mobility limitations with assistive devices;
- more likely to receive assistance with self-care, mobility, and household activities related to their health and functioning;
- more likely to experience unmet needs related to self-care mobility, and household activities;
- more likely to have low physical capacity, poor vision, and (in 2019) dementia, and Hispanic persons were more likely to have poor hearing as well;
- less likely to have bathing-related modifications, and Hispanic persons were less likely to have toileting-related modifications; and
- less likely to communicate by email or text and to go online for social networking, household activities, and health-related activities.

Furthermore, studies show disparities in the quality of care BIPOC seniors receive due to lower quality nursing homes and access to resources.[4] Therefore, efforts to connect older adults to County programs to remain in the comfort of their own homes and improve their quality of life and self-sufficiency will allow residents to age in place.

cc: James C. Bridgers, Jr., Ph.D., MBA, Department of Health and Human Services
Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive

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[2] Montgomery County Health and Human Services, Senior Care Program information. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Program.aspx?id=ADS/ADSSeniorCarePgm-p189.html

[3] Freedman VA, Cornman JC, Kasper JD. 2021. National Health and Aging Trends Study Chart Book: Key Trends, Measures and Detailed Tables. Available at: micda.isr.umich.edu/research/nhats-trends-dashboards.

[4] Health Equity - Reducing Disparities in Eldercare. July-August 2019. Available at: https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/archive/article/july-august-2019/health-equity---reducing-disparities-in-eldercare