

Testimony of

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Joint Legislative Budget Hearing

Conducted by

Senate Finance Committee

Assembly Ways & Means Committee

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Hearing Room B

Legislative Office Building

Empire State Plaza

Albany, New York

Good morning Chairman DeFrancisco, Chairman Farrell, Chairwoman Serino and distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees. My name is Corinda Crossdale and I am the Director of the New York State Office for the Aging.

The New York State Office for the Aging promotes and administers programs and services for New Yorkers who are 60 years of age and older as well as the families, friends and neighbors who provide vital supports to help them remain as independent as possible, for as long as possible, in their homes and communities of choice. In carrying out the agency's mission, NYSOFA provides leadership and direction to an integrated network of 59 county based Area Agencies on Aging and more than 1,200 public and private organizations which serve and help empower older adults and their families. Further, Governor Cuomo's priority to better coordinate state agencies in an effort to reduce duplication, strengthen service delivery, increase efficiency and improve outcomes has created strong working partnerships among many agencies.

Governor Cuomo's 2015 State of Opportunity Executive Budget builds on the historic reforms enacted over the past four years to continue creating a *new* New York. The Governors Executive Budget is positive for older New Yorkers and their families, addressing new and emerging areas where private and public partnerships are leveraging resources that speak to primary areas of concern.

The Executive Budget continues its commitment to core aging programs and services, assuring that those who are served throughout the state have access to cost-effective, high quality services that support independence. As such, the Executive Budget preserves funding for key programs including the Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP), which provides non-medical in-home services, case management, respite and ancillary services to frail older adults. The Wellness in Nutrition Program (WIN) funds home delivered and congregate meals and provides nutrition counseling and education to frail older adults who may be unable to prepare meals for themselves. The Executive Budget includes the \$5 million increase from the 2014-2015 final budget for Community Services for the Elderly Program (CSE), which provides flexible funds to counties to meet locally determined needs.

The Executive Budget also makes a strategic investment in New York Connects. NY Connects is a statewide, locally based no wrong door system that provides one stop access to free, objective and comprehensive information and assistance on accessing long term services and supports. The Budget provides \$8.2 million in 2015-16 to maintain ongoing operational support to the New York Connects program and the "No Wrong Door" initiative beyond the September 2015 Federal Balancing Incentive Program (BIP) funding expiration date.

The Executive Budget also directs NYSOFA to work with other state agencies and stakeholders to explore the opportunities in creating an Office for Community Living. The goal of exploring these opportunities is to improve service delivery and outcomes

for older adults and individuals of all ages with disabilities and further strengthen the states Olmstead Plan.

The \$242 million of funding provided to NYSOFA from the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) and from New York State leverages over \$200 million from the counties, local municipalities and voluntary contributions. The aging services network provided the following services in communities statewide:

- NY Connects: Choices for Long Term Care;
- Caregiver support services such as support groups, training and respite.
- Care management, personal care Level I and II and ancillary services such as personal emergency response system (PERS);
- Social adult day services;
- Transportation to medical appointments, community services and activities;
- Home delivered and congregate meals, nutrition counseling and education;
- Repair or modifications to individual homes to maintain a safe and accessible living environment;
- House cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping, errands, and bill paying;
- Long Term Care Ombudsman services;
- Health insurance information, counseling and assistance;
- Employment services;
- Expanded the use of Medicare prevention, screening and wellness benefits;
- Options counseling, benefits and application assistance;
- Legal services;
- Senior center programming;
- Evidence Based Interventions such as falls prevention and chronic disease management; and
- Volunteer opportunities

Additionally, NYSOFA has built strong partnerships with other state agencies to increase access to services and meet needs that cross systems. There are three that I specifically want to touch upon this afternoon:

1. Our partnership with DOH, OPWDD, and OMH on No Wrong Door. Meeting weekly for more than a year, we are working together to build on the current NY Connects program to provide a seamless system where individuals of all ages and disabilities have access to consistent information and assistance to meet all of their long term care needs;
2. NYSOFA has partnered with OCFS, 9 county offices for the aging, local governments and other providers to implement a unique intervention that prevents and addresses financial exploitation and elder abuse;
3. NYSOFA has also partnered with the New York State Office of Court Administration, OPWDD and the New York State Bar Association to ensure that older New Yorkers, people of all ages with disabilities and their caregivers have practical and effective access to affordable legal assistance.

**NYSOFA continues to be proactive in working to improve service delivery and advocacy for older adults by increasing partnerships and integrating our work with other agencies and entities. I want to thank the legislature for your commitment to aging services and for your partnership. We look forward to continuing to create systems that are seamless for the consumer and their families. Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.**