

**Testimony of Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center, Inc.
Before the Joint Fiscal Committees of the New York State Legislature**

Human Services Budget Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2017-18

Honorable Catharine M. Young, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chair, Assembly Ways & Means Committee

Honorable Sue Serino, Chair Senate Committee on Aging
Honorable Donna Lupardo, Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging

Honorable Tony Avella, Chair, Senate Committee on Children & Families
Honorable Ellen Jaffee, Chair, Assembly Committee on Children & Families

Honorable James Tedisco, Chair, Senate Committee on Social Services
Honorable Andrew Hevesi, Chair, Assembly Committee on Social Services

**Submitted by Rick Lewis, CEO & Alana Rosenstein, NNORC Director
February 14, 2017**

NORCs and Neighborhood NORCS

At the Mid-Island Y JCC, we see firsthand the tremendous power of N/NORC¹ programs to support safe and healthy aging in the community. Our Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community programs, POB Cares and Project PACE, are lifelines to local seniors. They allow residents to get to local shopping and medical appointments, prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, reduce isolation, and prevent premature institutional placement. N/NORC funding is an investment that can reduce Medicare and Medicaid costs, empower seniors, and mobilize resources within the community in support of its older adults. The benefits of N/NORC services far exceed the dollars invested at the state level.

N/NORCs provide programs and services that support a group that might otherwise fall through the cracks. N/NORCs provide case management, socialization programs, transportation and shopping assistance, as well as basic health services that allow seniors to remain in their homes, greatly improving their quality of life.

In the FY 2016-2017 Enacted Budget, significant legislative changes were made to the NORC program, including expanding NORC definitions to include rural NORCs and allowing NORCs to receive up to \$200,000 and neighborhood NORCs to receive no less than \$60,000 to support programming. The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) has released a Request for Applications (RFA) for N/NORCS that reflect the

¹ N/NORC indicates both NORC and NNORC programs

statutory changes, but only plans to fund 12 classic NORCs and 12 neighborhood NORCs. There are currently 16 classic NORCs and 13 neighborhood NORCs supported by NYSOFA.

Without any changes, five existing NORC programs will be forced to close. Governor Cuomo's FY 2017-2018 Executive Budget allocates \$2,027,500 for NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) and \$2,027,500 for Neighborhood NORCs (NNORCs). This eliminates the additional \$350,000 for NORCs and \$350,000 for Neighborhood NORCs that was included in the FY 2016-2017 Enacted Budget.

Furthermore, the RFA and the current budget allocation do not allow for expansion of the program, despite the fact that the legislation was updated last year with expansion in mind. Additional funding is vital to ensure that current NORCs can continue to provide services, particularly health care management services, and to grow the program to underserved areas with increasing aging populations.

Restoring \$700,000 from FY16-17 and investing an additional \$5.25 million in the N/NORC program (split evenly between the classic NORC and neighborhood NORC programs) will preserve the existing 29 NYSOFA-funded NORCs, and will allow for the creation of about 21 new NORCs across the State.

We are counting on your support to make sure that the existing 29 N/NORC programs across the state are able to keep their doors open, and that other communities are able to benefit from this very successful model.