



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## Aging Advocates, Senator Serino Urge At Least \$15M in Extra Aid to Support Family Caregivers

SUSAN SERINO March 22, 2016

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### **Aging Advocates, Senator Serino Urge At Least \$15M in Extra Aid to Support Family Caregivers**

*Funding Needed in New Budget to Eliminate Wait Lists for Services to Help NYers Age at Home Rather than Taxpayer-Funded Nursing Homes*

**ALBANY, New York** – In light of an aging population and increasing demands on New York's unpaid family caregivers, AARP, LiveOn NY and Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc. today joined State Senate Aging Committee Chair Sue Serino to urge at least \$15 million in additional cost-effective funding in a final state budget for services that help middle class New Yorkers age safely at home.

Senator Serino and the groups are calling for extra funding beyond the \$3 million increase the Senate Majority proposed for non-Medicaid, in-home services for the elderly. Additional

funding would help eliminate waiting lists of about 10,000 New Yorkers 60 and older for programs such as home-delivered meals and transportation. While the Senate's one-house budget proposal is a great first step, Senator Serino is urging an increase of at least \$15 million.

Those programs and services serve New Yorkers whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid but too low to afford such assistance out of their own pockets. They help New Yorkers age with independence and dignity in their own homes rather than in much costlier and mostly taxpayer-funded institutional care settings such as nursing homes.

“Community Services for the Elderly play an invaluable role in ensuring that our seniors can age independently and with dignity, and they provide critical respite for the unpaid caregivers who dedicate countless hours working toward that same goal,” said **Senator Sue Serino**, Chair of the Senate Aging Committee. “With almost 10,000 New Yorkers on waitlists to receive these services, it is clear that there is a demand for CSE and that it works. It is critically important that we make funding these services a priority in this year's budget.”

“Supporting family caregivers in their labor of love to help New Yorkers age in their own homes, where the vast majority want to be, is both compassionate and cost-effective,” said **Beth Finkel**, State Director of AARP in New York State – which urges a \$20 million increase. “Nearly 2.6 million family caregivers in New York provide unpaid care that's valued at **\$31.3 billion** annually. They are an incredibly valuable resource we should support. This funding would do that – and benefit taxpayers by reducing the need for placements in institutional

care settings such as nursing homes. As our population ages, support for caregivers will become more and more critical.”

“There are an astounding 10,000 seniors across the state languishing on waiting lists for meals-on-wheels, transportation, case management, adult day care, and other life sustaining services,” said **Igal Jellinek**, Executive Director of LiveOn NY. “LiveOn NY believes that New York state has a responsibility to plan for and fund services for older New Yorkers who overwhelmingly choose to remain in their homes and communities. Funding for CSE also supports family caregivers working hard to care for their elderly parents and other loved ones. LiveOn NY calls upon the state legislature to fully fund CSE.”

“Every day family caregivers across New York state struggle with issues like providing personal care for loved ones,” said **Ann Marie Cook**, President/CEO of Lifespan of Greater Rochester. “Every day they worry about aging parents. Every day they hope to avoid the crisis that will tip the delicate balance of independence versus dependence for aging family members. Over 10,000 family caregivers are waiting for help. They are waiting for community-based services so that they can keep loved ones at home and out of institutional settings. We urge additional funding to help these caregivers.”

The number of New Yorkers 65 and older is expected to grow from one in seven in 2010 to nearly one in five by 2035. But the number of potential 45- to 64-years-old caregivers for every New Yorker 80 or older **is expected to dwindle from 6.6 in 2010 to 4.8 in 2030 and 3.5 in 2050.**

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