

In Hard Times, Protect What Works! Protect the Home Care Solution, Protect the Vulnerable!

Maintain Current Funding for the Senior Citizens Services Act (SCSA)

In 1977, SCSA was enacted to honor the choice and dignity of older Washingtonians who wanted to stay in their own homes and communities. It's been an excellent investment for Washington State, providing huge savings by assisting people to manage their affairs and avoid the use of the public Medicaid system. SCSA has played a central role in the State's rebalancing efforts.

Senior Information and Assistance (I&A) gets 200,000+ calls each year. SCSA funding helps families avoid more costly care options with a range of services, like Senior Nutrition and Transportation.

SCSA saves the state Medicaid system over \$11 million each year. 65,000+ older Washingtonians (25% are eligible for Medicaid-funded nursing facility care) remain at home with SCSA's help.



Maintain Home Care Options: Protect Eligibility, Home Care Agencies & Adult Day Health

Washington's successful long term care system ranks 2nd in the nation, but only 30th in per capita spending on long term care. Our current system is both popular and cost effective. We lead the country in choice of settings and providers and in supporting individuals and families. That's the result of legislative reforms to rebalance the system. In 1995, Medicaid publicly funded more than 15,000 nursing home beds. Today, that would translate into 23,000 nursing home beds with the growth in the population, but less than 11,000 Medicaid nursing home beds are occupied as a result of expanded community options.

Washington serves 2.3 times more consumers per dollar in home and community based settings as compared to nursing home settings. Legislative action to rebalance options and to move away from expensive nursing home care has saved an estimated \$3.34 billion from 1996 to present day.

Raising eligibility standards for Medicaid in-home services would reverse this trend. Cuts to Adult Day Health would deny help to thousands in the future. Cuts to the administrative budgets of home care agencies would force some out of the industry and reduce options for home care consumers. The health of those who lose these services will deteriorate, leading to more expensive interventions in hospitals and nursing homes.

Maintain Funding for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Long term care facilities in Washington State receive weekly visits from well-trained and specially-selected volunteers who are there to help residents solve problems and avoid more costly state-staffed interventions. The program has suffered from a Federal cut and now faces additional State cuts. Nursing home, Adult Family Home and Assisted Living residents – our most vulnerable consumers - deserve strong advocates.

- ✓ ***ACTION NEEDED: The Legislature should fully fund the Senior Citizens Services Act, maintain current Medicaid eligibility standards and fully fund Home Care Agencies, Adult Day Health and the volunteer Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.***

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Support Unpaid Family Caregivers

Continue Expanded Family Caregiver Support Program Funding

GOAL: Provide 2nd year funding to complete the process designed to demonstrate savings garnered by supporting unpaid family caregivers.

BACKGROUND: Last June, the Legislature provided additional funds to greatly increase the number of unpaid family caregivers served statewide. Unpaid family caregivers are the backbone of the long-term care system in Washington State, providing a substantial proportion of chronic care services to family and neighbors, and helping avoid more costly Medicaid services.

In what was to be a two year effort, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) were instructed to quickly do outreach to bring in additional family caregivers for services. Along with the increase in funding and families served, the Legislature funded a study to be conducted to determine the impact of serving additional family caregivers on overall savings in state expenditures, because these effective services help keep more families from moving to Medicaid-funded services.

Since July of last year, when the additional funding was finalized, in not quite 7 months' time, AAAs have recruited an additional 1500 families and begun to provide the slate of Family Caregiver services. The study to determine effectiveness of services statewide has only just been designed, and has not yet been able to begin its task of substantiating the effectiveness of the services.

The Governor's 2012 supplemental budget proposal included additional funding to complete the process this year, and booked an anticipated savings of approximately \$1.8 million in state general funds as a result of the investment. Nonetheless, the current House budget proposal, if passed, would abruptly put a stop to this process, and leave Area Agencies on Aging without the funds to effectively serve the numbers of families the Legislature directed them to seek out and serve. And the study to substantiate the effectiveness of the services would not have even been begun!

NECESSARY ACTION: Provide the state funds necessary to continue expanded services to family caregivers that have just begun, and to complete the study designed to show the overall savings in state expenditures this modest investment will bring.

Fund Volunteer Services: Help Seniors, Veterans, and Others in Need Stay at Home

BACKGROUND: In 1981, when Washington State was also in a very severe financial crisis and many in-home care services were eliminated, Volunteer Chore Services (VCS) was enacted. The name was changed to Volunteer Services (VS) in 2010. Last year 9,081 volunteers provided 276,825 service hours (equivalent to 133 FTE's) to 5,581 clients statewide. Volunteer Services include meal preparation, transportation, housekeeping assistance, shopping, laundry help, and access to federal benefits that help many of our most vulnerable citizens stay at home.