



Council of Senior Centers & Services of NYC, Inc.

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**THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT AND ITS IMPACT ON NY STATE
PUBLIC HEARING – APRIL 9, 2010
SENATOR RUBEN DIAZ, SR.
CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON AGING**

Council of Senior Centers and Services would like to thank Senator Ruben Diaz, Sr., Chair, Senate Committee on Aging, for holding a hearing on the upcoming reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

Council of Senior Centers and Services (CSCS) is the central organization in NYC representing 150 sponsors who operated over 400 programs serving 300,000 older New Yorkers. Services provided by CSCS members include: multi-service senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, case management, home care, transportation, adult day services, NORCs, elder abuse, mental health, housing, intergenerational and a gamut of other community-based services.

With the flow of Older Americans Act (OAA) funds into NYC giving rise to the senior center and elderly nutrition movement, CSCS was founded in 1979 by a group of visionaries who saw the need for the growing community-based sector to have a central voice when working with government and other community partners. The NYC community-based aging services network, born out of this initial funding, has taken the foundation of OAA and built the most extensive community-based network of senior centers and other services in the nation.

However, OAA funding has not kept pace with the need of a growing elderly population or inflation. In the 2006 reauthorization, after many years of Congressional conflicts, the Title 3B and 3C interstate funding formulas were revised resulting in less new OAA funds for NY State and NYC. If OAA kept pace with need and inflation, it would be receiving an additional \$480 million.

It is critical to understand the context of the aging demographic revolution in NY State and NYC in order to understand the importance of NY State getting its fair share of OAA funds.

According the U.S. Administration on Aging, nationally, OAA funded programs provide the following community-based services:

- Nearly **28 million** hours of in-home services such as homemaker, chore and personal care;
- Nearly **236 million** meals in home and community-based settings,
- Nearly **13 million** units of services for over **700,000** caregivers and,
- **29 million** rides to doctor's offices and other critical daily activities.

Demographic information from the NY State Office for the Aging and NYC Department for the Aging:

- **Growth in NY's older adult population:** From 1990 – 2000, the State's age 85-plus population increased by 25.5 percent, going from 248,173 to 311,488. The 75-plus population increased by 15.4 percent - from 1,015,443 to 1,172,306. Women continue to outnumber men by almost three-to-one in this age category despite small gains in growth for men.
- **Increased mobility limitations:** Over the last decade, the number of elderly (age 65+) with mobility limitations grew by 40.8 percent and the minority elderly (age 60+) grew by a 35.6 percent
- **New York ranks third in the nation** in the number of older adults - 3.4 million.
- **Increased proportion of older New Yorkers:** For the majority of counties (48), older people constituted between 12 and 19 percent of each county's population in 2000. By 2015, older people will constitute 20-24 percent of the county population in 35 counties and 25-29 percent of the county population in 17 counties.
- **Almost 78% of state's minority elderly live in NYC**, and now comprise half of all NYC residents age 60+.
- **Growth in minority elderly population:** The growth rate for minority populations is expected to differ greatly over the 2000-2025 period, with the 2000 Census reflecting for the first time in history that the Hispanic population is the largest minority group in the state.
- **The 2000 Census reports that in New York State:**
 - ✓ 20 percent of people 75 or older living alone live in poverty
 - ✓ Of all New Yorkers 65 and older in poverty in 2000, almost 2 of 5 (37.9 percent) are women age 75 and older
 - ✓ Over half (55.4 percent) are living alone on incomes of under \$8,259.
 - ✓ The minority elderly, according to the 2000 Census, have the highest poverty rates. In comparison to 7.9 percent of non-minority age 65 or older in 2000, 23.4 percent of minority elderly age 65 or older. Minority older adults comprise over half of all senior citizens in NYC.
- **Poverty among the elderly in NYC is even more stark: (DFTA's FY11 Annual Plan) -**
 - ✓ Based on the federal poverty guidelines, almost 20% of NYC's elderly live in poverty – less than \$10,000 a year income.
 - ✓ Whereas the U.S. has experienced a decline in the elderly poverty rate from 12.8% in 1990 to 9.5% in 2007, NYC's elderly have experienced a 12% increase to nearly one out of five living in poverty.
 - ✓ In 2007, 27.6% of Hispanic elderly lived in poverty; 25.9% Asian elderly; 18.9% Black elderly; and 13.9% white elderly.
 - ✓ Social isolation and living alone: In 2007, one-third of NYC residents age 65+ lived alone. Those living alone had the highest poverty rate, 31%, among all elderly households.
 - ✓ When the Bloomberg administration used poverty guidelines developed by the National Academy of Sciences, elderly poverty rate jumped to one-third of all older adults in NYC.
 - ✓ According to the NYC Department for the Aging, 90% of senior center participants live below poverty.

- ***The reauthorization of OAA in 2011 coincides with the first of the nation's baby boomers turning 65.*** Mayor Michael Bloomberg's NYC 2030 Plan reports a projected increase of 47% in the 60+ population, which will then comprise 20% of the city's population, 1.84 million. This is larger than most cities in America. Anyone who is age 40 or older today, will be 60 or older by 2030.

OAA Interstate Funding Formula Issues:

The reauthorization of the OAA finally culminated in the 2006 amendments after many years of contentious issues being raised in Congress. States experiencing a greater growth in their 60+ population believed that they were not getting their fair share of OAA Title III B and C funds. The funding formula disagreement held up OAA reauthorization for many years. A compromise was reached intended to direct additional OAA funds to "growth states" while protecting other states. In essence, OAA funds were driven away from the northeast and the Midwest rust belt to the South, Southwest, and West coast states. States to look out for possibly advocating for further changes to the funding formula that could hurt New York include California, Florida and New Mexico among others. ***According to the NY State Office for the Aging, since 2000, our state has received only \$5 million in new funds through the Older Americans Act. During that time, the state has increased its funding for aging services by \$44 million. OAA's interstate funding formula and the need to substantially increase funding for the Act has lagged seriously behind the needs of older New Yorkers.***

OAA is egregiously underfunded having been neglected for decades. In essence, this became a "national food fight". ***So-called growth states (growth by percentage not hard numbers) fought to take Title III nutrition and Title III-B supportive services dollars from older New Yorkers in non-growth states. NY state has the third highest 60+ population in the nation, 3.5 million (and 2.5 million caregivers). The NY State Office for the Aging projects that 52 out of 59 counties in NY will have populations of 20% or more seniors by 2015. It is clearly inappropriate public policy to remove funds from such a populous state. Additionally, NYC taxpayers already send billions of dollars more to Washington than we receive back.***

New York and Massachusetts, standing to lose much money, waged the largest opposition. *CSCS worked closely with the NY State Office for the Aging and NY's congressional delegation to oppose funding formula changes that hurt NY's older adult population and the aging services network.* Two criteria were added to the OAA interstate funding formula to lessen the loss of funding: hold harmless and guaranteed growth.

Hold harmless: This guaranteed that no state would receive less than the amount they received in FY2006 for Titles 3 B, C, and D. This does not affect Title 3E, the National Caregivers Program enacted under the Clinton administration, which uses a per capita formula based on a state's population size.

Guaranteed growth: This provision was included to protect "non-growth" states. NY and Massachusetts were successful in winning this provision in 2000. This resulted in assisting states like NY that were considered "out of parity" (ie, getting more than our "fair share" of OAA funds) having a measure of protection. The guaranteed growth provision allowed "non-growth" states to get 20% of what they would have normally been entitled to with new title 3 funds so they'd always get something. By 2006, a lot of states reached parity, but not NY. ***The 2006 amendments retained the hold harmless, but eliminated the guaranteed growth. Therefore, if a state, like NY, is not at parity, it will receive no new title 3 funds. We are still a distance from parity for congregate meals.*** Kansas, Assistant Secretary of Aging's Kathy Greenlee's home state, was in the same situation as NY in 2006.

Concern has been raised, that with the impending 2011 reauthorization, the so-called “growth states” will attempt to eliminate the hold harmless provision, the last measure of protection to NY’s OAA title 3 funding. If the hold harmless provision is removed, in FFY12, NY state will lose title 3 funds, ie – our base funding will diminish as it flows to other states.

There is also concern that there might be efforts made to combine Titles C(1) and C(2), congregate meals and home-delivered meals into one funding stream leaving it up to states to decide how to spend these funds. This would likely be damaging to senior center congregate meals as the movement of funding is generally towards home-delivered meals. As there is no senior center funding stream in OAA, the loss of title C(1) funds at a time senior centers nationally are struggling would do great damage and could further isolate seniors who would like to leave their homes and eat nutritional meals with peers.

There is currently no dedicated funding stream for senior centers to help them increase their capacity and introduce new programs and services to meet the coming age wave. CSCS is currently working with the NYC Department for the Aging to develop its Charter Senior Center Initiative (concept paper can be found at www.cscs-ny.org). When OAA was enacted in 1965, the centerpiece was nutrition sites for the elderly in response to national studies reporting hunger and poor nutrition among older Americans. Over the past decades, most senior centers have evolved into multi-service senior centers serving several generations of older New Yorkers, age 60-100+.

Charter senior center principles include new funding, regulatory relief to allow senior centers more flexibility in how they do business and maximize budget efficiencies and outcome measures to validate the value of senior centers in the lives of older adults. Providing funding for innovative senior centers based on the charter senior center model and other models across the country would benefit thousands of older Americans for whom senior center attendance is transformative in their lives. Language could be added to OAA implementing a title for multi-service senior centers as none exists now.

Economic security case management - With older Americans facing increasing difficulty to remain in the homes and communities due to insufficient income and a poor economy, assisting them to maximize available public benefits is essential. Language in OAA that could address this concern would bring much needed attention to this issue. One integral service in economic security is financial money management, or a bill payer program. CSCS has developed a bill payer program in New York City over the past few years which utilizing trained volunteers assists elderly individuals in paying their bills. Paying your bills is key to remaining home. Financial money management should become a part of case management. OAA language to regarding economic security case management would be valuable.

President Barack Obama’s FFY11 budget includes a \$102.5 million increase to OAA. About half is for Title III B and C, support services and nutrition, and the other half is for the 3E, the caregiver program. Estimates are that NY state would receive about \$6-\$7 million. As NYC has about 40% of the state’s 60+ population, it would receive approximately \$2.4-2.8 million. While this isn’t a lot of money, it would still serve to close some of the budget gaps senior nutrition programs and the caregiver program have suffered through in recent years. NYC cut the caregiver program by a total of 21% in the past few years greatly limiting the support services such as respite for family caregivers.

If the hold harmless provision is eliminated, NY would receive even less. *Advocating for increased title 3E caregiver funds is important as NY does well in this funding formula getting our state's population's fair share.*

CSCS recommends that the Chairs of the NY state legislature aging committees work with the Congressional delegation, community service providers, advocates and older New Yorkers to raise awareness of the funding formula problems. A briefing meeting with the NY state congressional delegation to discuss the impact of the interstate funding formula on NY's elderly and community-based senior service agencies would be a good step.

No older New Yorker should lose meal funds or senior center supportive services to someone living in another state. The real fight is to increase OAA funds so that all states benefit. CSCS is prepared to work with elected and government officials, advocates, and other stakeholders make sure that NY state and NYC receive their fair share of OAA funds. We are grateful for the recent meeting with U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand where arranged by Senator Diaz. At that meeting, OAA issues impacting New York were discussed. We would like to work with Senator Diaz and Senator Gillibrand to strengthen the Older Americans Act in a way that serves older New Yorkers and all older Americans.