



THE ADVOCATE

August 2019

FY 2020 State Health and Human Services Budget Update

The Michigan House and Senate have each passed budget proposals for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 state spending, which begins on October 1, 2019. Differences in the House and Senate Health and Human Services budgets will be reconciled by a conference committee consisting of three Senators and three Representatives (listed below) before a final budget is sent to the Governor for her approval. Advocates are encouraged to contact their own State Representatives and Senators in addition to conference committee members to urge them to include key funding priorities for senior services in their final budget proposal.

Silver Key Coalition – Senior In-Home Services

At the end of FY 2018 there were 6,294 seniors across the state on waiting lists for Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) services which include in-home personal care assistance, homemaking, and home delivered meals. The Silver Key Coalition is a statewide group advocating for a \$6 million increase in funding to address unmet needs for these services. The Senate put a \$100 increase placeholder in their budget proposal for these senior in-home services; this placeholder was a signal that the Senate was interested in adding more funding to this program if funds are available. The House MDHHS Appropriations subcommittee recommended a small reduction (less than 1%) to AASA in-home services.

MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program

The MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program provides long term supportive services in the community to adults who require a nursing facility level of care. The Senate proposed a \$5.3 million reduction from FY 19 spending level. The House included a \$40.5 million total increase (\$14.6 million from the state General Fund) to increase the reimbursement rates for service providers by 5% and to increase the number of total MI Choice enrollments by 1,000. This would improve the financial stability of the program, enabling providers to serve more people in their homes and communities.

The AAA 1-B supports the Silver Key Coalition’s request to increase funding for AASA in-home services by \$6 million and the House’s proposal to increase funding for the MI Choice Waiver Program.

MDHHS Conference Committee Members:

PARTY	DIST.	TITLE	FIRST	LAST	COUNTY	PHONE	EMAIL
R	28	Senator	Peter	MacGregor	Kent	(517) 373-0797	senpmacgregor@senate.michigan.gov
R	36	Senator	Jim	Stamas	10 Counties in Northeast MI	(517) 373-7946	senjstamas@senate.michigan.gov
D	23	Senator	Curtis	Hertel	Ingham	(517) 373-1734	senchertel@senate.michigan.gov
R	80	Rep.	Mary	Whiteford	Allegan	(517) 373-0836	MaryWhiteford@house.mi.gov
R	84	Rep.	Phil	Green	Huron and Tuscola	(517) 373-0476	RepPhilGreen@house.mi.gov
D	15	Rep.	Abdullah	Hammoud	Wayne	(517) 373-0847	AbdullahHammoud@house.mi.gov

Senate Committee Begins Work on Older Americans Act Reauthorization

Members of Congress were in their districts for the August recess and will return to DC in September to make decisions about federal funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, which begins on October 1, 2019. In July lawmakers passed the 2019 Bipartisan Budget Agreement which increased overall federal budget caps for FY 2020 and FY 2021. The Budget Agreement raised the maximum funding level, known as a budget cap, for non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs like the Older Americans Act by 16 percent from the budget limits established in the 2011 Budget Control Act and 5.6 percent over FY 2019 funding. The budget agreement also increased funding for Defense Discretionary spending, and it included one-time funding of \$2.5 billion for the 2020 Census.

This agreement sets the stage for lawmakers to finalize spending decisions for individual federal programs by the end of September when current FY 2019 funding expires.

In May the House appropriations committee approved its FY 2020 funding bill for the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services (HHS). This budget proposal included significant funding increases for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs. Proposed increases include:

- III B Home and Community-Based Supportive Services by \$37 million (~10 percent) to \$422 million
- III C1 Congregate Meals by \$29.6 million (6 percent) to \$525 million
- III C2 Home-Delivered Meals by \$53.6 million (21 percent) to \$305 million
- III E National Family Caregiver Support Program by \$19 million (10 percent) to \$200 million
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) by \$5.9 million (12 percent) to \$55 million
- OAA Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Prevention of Elder Abuse and Neglect programs by \$2 million (9 percent) to \$23.7 million.
- Elder Justice Initiative by \$5 million (33 percent) to \$20.8 million

The Senate has not released their budget proposal for FY 2020. Once the Senate passes their budget, the House and Senate will need to agree on final funding levels before sending the budget to the President for his signature. While it appears likely that Congress will pass a budget before end of September, if the House and Senate are not able to reach an agreement, they may opt to pass a temporary Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep federal spending going before completing a final budget for FY 2020.

Aging advocates should request that the Senate adopt the House-passed increases for critical aging supports to address the growing demand for senior services. Michigan's Senators can be reached at the following numbers: Senator Debbie Stabenow (202) 224-4822 and Senator Gary Peters Phone: (202) 224-6221.



The Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) is a nonprofit agency serving the needs of older adults in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties. Contact Katie Wendel, (248) 262-9232 or by e-mail at kwendel@aaa1b.org to join the Senior Advocacy Network or receive copies of AAA 1-B reports referenced in The Advocate.