



Governor Whitmer FY 2022 Budget Proposal Proposes Permanent Wage Increase for Direct Care Workers, MI Choice Increase

On February 11th, Governor Whitmer released her budget proposal for state spending in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, which begins on October 1st. Information about priority proposals for senior services are listed below:

Direct Care Workforce: The Governor's proposed budget included \$360 million to make the \$2 per hour premium pay increase for direct care workers permanent in FY 2022. The Governor also proposed extending the increase for the remainder of FY 2021. For more information on this issue, see the article below.

MI Choice: The Governor proposed a \$19.1 million increase for the MI Choice program to enroll 1,000 more participants across the state. The MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program provides long term supportive services in the community to adults who require a nursing facility level of care.

Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) In-Home Services: The Governor's budget did not include increased state funding for AASA in-home service programs. The budget did include increased federal authorizations for AASA services, which allow for possible future federal increases or carry over funding to be distributed. These authorizations do not guarantee that additional funds will be available. The Silver Key Coalition is leading advocacy efforts to encourage the legislature to increase funding for AASA in-home services. For more information about the Silver Key Coalition's request see page 2 of *The Advocate*.

The Governor's budget marks the beginning of budget negotiations with the legislature. In the coming months the House and Senate will release their own proposals for FY 2022 state spending.

Action Needed to Extend Premium Pay for Direct Care Workforce

The \$2 per hour premium pay increase for direct care workers providing personal care assistance to seniors and people with disabilities is set to expire at the end of February. This increase has provided critical support for direct care workers in Medicaid programs, including MI Choice and nursing facilities, and Aging and Adult Services Agency programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is broad support from the Governor's office and the legislature for continuing the increase, but the proposal is part of a larger supplemental budget bill that will need to be enacted for the premium pay increase to continue without interruption.

Advocates are encouraged to contact their elected officials to voice their support for immediate action to continue the premium pay increase for direct care workers without interruption

Silver Key Coalition Urges Investment in Senior In-Home Services

The Silver Key Coalition is a statewide group of more than 40 organizations committed to addressing the unmet needs of Michigan seniors on waiting lists for Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) in-home services. At the end of FY 2020, there were over 6,000 older adults on waiting lists for critical in-home services such as personal care, homemaking, and home delivered meals.

To address the unmet need for these services, the Silver Key Coalition is urging state lawmakers to allocate a \$6.375 million increase for in-home services and a \$1 million increase for home delivered meals in the FY 2022 budget.

Advocates are encouraged to contact their state Representatives and Senators and urge them to include the Silver Key Coalition's recommendation in their FY 2022 budget proposals. A handout with more information about the Silver Key Coalition's FY 2022 budget request is attached as the next page of *The Advocate*.

House Proposes Older Americans Act Funding Increase in Next Federal COVID-19 Supplemental

On February 10th House Education and Labor Committee passed a COVID relief proposal that included substantial funding for Older Americans Act programs and services provided by Area Agencies on Aging. The proposal includes \$1.444 billion in emergency funding that would be in addition to regular Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations for OAA services.

Funding proposed in the COVID-19 relief bill includes:

- \$470 million for OAA Title III-B Supportive Services , which funds programs like in home personal care, homemaking and transportation
- \$750 million for Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services
- \$44 million for Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs
- \$145 million for Family Caregiver Programs
- \$10 million for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

This proposal will now be considered by the full House of Representatives and Senate.

AAA 1-B Legislator Contact Guides for 2021-2022 Legislative Session Now Available

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B has published Legislator Contact guides as a resource for senior advocates in Region 1-B. The guides include information about how to contact your legislator, including pictures, phone numbers and email addresses for elected officials.

The county-specific guides can be found on the AAA 1-B website at:

<https://aaa1b.org/advocacy/contacting-your-elected-officials/>



Silver Key Coalition

*Working to Make Michigan a No Wait State for Senior In-Home Services
40+ Member Organizations Strong*

Michigan's Seniors Need In-Home Care

Invest in AASA Services to Keep Seniors Safe at Home

The Silver Key Coalition is requesting a **\$6.375 million increase for senior in home services** and a **\$1 million increase for Home Delivered Meals** in the Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) FY 2022 budget.

- ▶ **6,104** Michigan seniors are on waiting lists for essential non-Medicaid in-home services, including personal care and home delivered meals.
 - ▶ The Silver Key Coalition supports the MI Commission on Services to the Aging's recommendation that an increase of \$6.375 million [General Fund (GF)] be allocated to support the 5,169 seniors on waiting lists for AASA in-home services.
 - ▶ The Silver Key Coalition requests that an increase of \$1 million GF be directed to support the 935 older adults on waiting lists for the Home Delivered Meal program.
- ▶ Seniors who remain on waiting lists are **5x** more likely to end up in a Nursing Home.
- ▶ The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on Michigan's older adults, with **89%** of deaths occurring in adults over age 60.
- ▶ Michigan's 2.4 million senior population is growing by **46,000 seniors** each year.

The ability to age in place in your own home is more important now than ever for Michigan seniors. State funds are essential for core programs to continue operations in FY 2022 after one-time federal emergency funds expire.

We ask for your support of state investment in AASA in-home and nutrition services to ensure seniors have access to the resources they need to stay safe at home.