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**Testimony of
Corinda Crossdale, Director
New York State Office for the Aging**



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**Office for
the Aging**

**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing
Conducted By
Senate Finance Committee
Assembly Ways & Means Committee**

**Tuesday, February 9, 2016
Hearing Room B
Legislative Office Building
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York**

Good morning Chairpersons Young, Farrell, Serino, Cymbrowitz and distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees. My name is Corinda Crossdale and I am the Director of the New York State Office for the Aging.

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), established in 1961, is New York's designated state unit on aging as required by the federal Older Americans Act. NYSOFA is the lead agency for promoting, coordinating, and administering federal, state and local programs and services for older New Yorkers ages 60 and over and their caregivers.

The goals and priorities of the State Office for the Aging are consistent with the States' vision for promoting and sustaining the independence of older New Yorkers, slowing the growth of Medicaid spending, reducing preventable hospital readmissions and supporting New York's Olmstead implementation plan.

In carrying out the agency's mission, NYSOFA provides leadership and direction to an integrated network of 59 county based Area Agencies on Aging and more than 1,200 public and private organizations which serve and help empower older adults and their families. Governor Cuomo's priority to better coordinate state agencies work in an effort to better utilize and leverage existing resources, reduce duplication, strengthen service delivery, increase efficiency and improve outcomes has led to stronger working partnerships among many agencies.

In addition to protecting and preserving core programs we administer, the Executive Budget over the past two years has invested an additional \$8 million to increase access to services statewide. This includes \$7.5 million to expand the Community Services for the Elderly Program (CSE), which provides flexible funds to counties to meet locally determined needs and \$500,000 to support the modernization of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP). LTCOP serves as an advocate and resource for persons who reside in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living and board & care homes.

The Executive Budget also supports the sustainability plan for the enhanced and expanded New York Connects program under the state's Balanced Incentive Payment (BIP) award. NY Connects is a statewide, locally based no wrong door system that provides one stop access to free, objective and comprehensive information and assistance on accessing long term services and supports.

NYSOFA receives about \$210 million annually from the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) and state general fund resources. These funds leverage an additional \$250 million from county match, voluntary contributions, cost-sharing and fundraising. The statewide network of service providers and volunteers that work to support older adults and their caregivers are able to be successful because of the public/private partnerships that have been built as a result of how the network was originally organized and the recognition that partnerships are the only way to strengthen and expand services. These services are coordinated with other entities that provide

similar services such as faith-based organizations, not-for profits, and other municipal support. The aging services network provides the following core services in communities statewide:

- Legal services;
- Caregiver support services such as support groups, training and respite.
- Care management and assistance with everyday tasks such as bathing, dressing, eating, house cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, grocery shopping, errands, and bill paying
- Social adult day services;
- Transportation to medical appointments, community services and activities;
- Home delivered and congregate meals, nutrition counseling and education;
- Repair or modifications to individual homes to maintain a safe and accessible living environment;
- Long Term Care Ombudsman services;
- Health insurance information, counseling and assistance;
- Employment services;
- Expanded the use of Medicare prevention, screening and wellness benefits;
- Options counseling, benefits and application assistance;
- NY Connects: Choices for Long Term Care;
- Senior center programming;
- Evidence Based Interventions such as falls prevention and chronic disease management; and
- Volunteer opportunities

Preliminary data has shown that when compared to last year, the network has expanded access to many core services. Service expansion between 6% and 41% were realized depending on the particular service.

Additionally, NYSOFA's partnership with the county offices for the aging and sister state agencies to increase access to services has yielded positive results. These include

1. **Health Insurance, Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)** – HIICAP was able to provide savings in the amount of \$43.6 million dollars to low-income New York Medicare beneficiaries who were seeking financial assistance with prescription drugs and other Medicare costs through enrollment assistance into Extra Help and the Medicare Savings Program. This past year HIICAP served 158,649 Medicare beneficiaries in New York State.
2. **Enhanced and Expanded NY Connects** became operational across the state, including the five boroughs comprising NY City, as of September 30, 2015. Work is on-going to reach full implementation by the end of 2016.

NYSOFA continues to work closely with DOH and other state partners (OPWDD, OMH, OASAS) as well as the local NY Connects programs. An RFA to expand

and enhance NY Connects for persons with physical disabilities will be issued in 2016.

3. **Elder Abuse/Crimes Against the Elderly** - NYSOFA has partnered with OCFS, and other partners to pilot an enhanced multi-disciplinary teams (E-MDT) approach to combating elder abuse and financial exploitation. The addition of a forensic accountant within the E-MDT's has proven to be a very successful model. Training has been initiated with DFS and OCFS for financial institutions on financial exploitation. NYSOFA is also working with DCJS to update the basic course for police officers in NYS to help law enforcement be better equipped to identify and assist older adults who are abused or are victims of other crimes.
4. **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)** – In partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Markets, county offices for the aging received a 25% increase in the number and value of coupon books that allows low-income, at risk older adults to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

NYSOFA continues to be proactive in working to improve service delivery and advocacy for older adults by increasing partnerships and integrating our work with other agencies and entities. I want to thank you for your commitment to aging services and for your partnership. We look forward to continuing to create systems that are seamless for the consumer and their families. Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.