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PSSS Programs

Penn South Program
for Seniors (PSPS)

Penn South Home
Organized Personal
Services (PS-HOPS)

**Testimony of Gary Schoichet, President, Penn South Social Services to
the Joint Fiscal Committees of the New York State Legislature**

Human Services Budget Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2017-18

Honorable Catharine M. Young, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Honorable Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chair, Assembly Ways & Means Committee

Honorable Sue Serino, Chair Senate Committee on Aging

Honorable Donna Lupardo, Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging

Honorable Tony Avella, Chair, Senate Committee on Children & Families

Honorable Ellen Jaffee, Chair, Assembly Committee on Children & Families

Honorable James Tedisco, Chair, Senate Committee on Social Services

Honorable Andrew Hevesi, Chair, Assembly Committee on Social Services

Submitted by Matthew Kahn, Executive Director, Penn South Social Services
February 9, 2017

NORCs and Neighborhood NORCS:

As New Yorkers age, an increasing number of residents will require the special health and social services facilitated by Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Neighborhood NORCs (NNORCs). These vital programs and resources help enable low-middle income New Yorkers age in place, thrive in their communities and delay hospitalization or nursing home placement.

N/NORCs¹ provide programs and services that support a group that might otherwise fall through the cracks. N/NORCs provide case management, socialization programs, transportation and shopping assistance, as well as basic health services that allow seniors to remain in their homes, greatly improving their quality of life.

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In the FY 2016-2017 Enacted Budget, significant legislative changes were made to the NORC program, including expanding NORC definitions to include rural NORCs and allowing NORCs to receive up to \$200,000 and neighborhood NORCs to receive no less than \$60,000 to support programming. The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) has released a Request for Applications (RFA) for N/NORCs that reflect the statutory changes, but only plans to fund 12 classic NORCs and 12 neighborhood NORCs. There are currently 16 classic NORCs and 13 neighborhood NORCs supported by NYSOFA.

Without any changes, five existing NORC programs will be forced to close.

Governor Cuomo's FY 2017-2018 Executive Budget allocates \$2,027,500 for NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) and \$2,027,500 for Neighborhood NORCs (NNORCs). This eliminates the additional \$350,000 for NORCs and \$350,000 for Neighborhood NORCs that was included in the FY 2016-2017 Enacted Budget.

Furthermore, the RFA and the current budget allocation do not allow for expansion of the program, despite the fact that the legislation was updated last year with expansion in mind. Additional funding is vital to ensure that current NORCs can continue to provide services, particularly health care management services, and to grow the program to underserved areas with increasing aging populations.

Restoring \$700,000 from FY16-17 and investing an additional \$5.25 million in the N/NORC program (split evenly between the classic NORC and neighborhood NORC programs) will preserve the existing 29 NYSOFA-funded NORCs, and will allow for the creation of about 21 new NORCs across the State.

The Penn South Program for Senior started in 1986 and annually we help more than 950 seniors with a variety of needs and we could reach more with your help.

Attached is a brief example of one of the many ways that we help our senior's age in place. Our program is a win/win for all parties. Our clients get the services they need to remain healthy and vibrant members of our community, our community thrives by having a healthy and safe environment, and our state and city organizations save funds that would otherwise need to be spent on hospital and institutional care. With your help we can continue our program.

Penn South Program for Seniors is a vital resource to our community and we are urging you to please ensure proper funding is available to all NORC programs.

Thank you for your support,

Gary Sentoicet

President

Penn South Social Services – Case Study

Let me share a quick case study to highlight one example of the great things that we do for our elderly community:

“LB is an 86 year old single Jewish woman who lives alone in a bare one-bedroom apartment. Many pieces of her furniture were very old and broken. Her TV didn’t function, and she listened to the radio as her sole source of entertainment. LB has a fixed income and no assets. She is socially isolated, never married and has no remaining family members. She suffers from arthritis and uses a rollator to ambulate. PSPS assisted LB with benefits and entitlements, such as the Medicare Savings Program, SCRIE and food stamps. The program also referred her for EISEP housekeeping services which she was granted after several obstacles, including LB’s reluctance for the program to make a home visit. LB revealed that she had not been able to use her tub and bathroom sink for many months due to plumbing problems. The PSPS social worker contacted the co-op’s Maintenance Department and arranged for the necessary repairs. A grant from JASA was obtained to purchase a new recliner, mattress and TV for her. Fortunately, LB now receives weekly services from her EISEP housekeeper who does her laundry, grocery shopping and housework, such as mopping and dusting. She allows the PSPS social worker to visit on a regular basis, but not during her favorite program, Judge Judy!”

