

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

Thursday, January 24, 2019  
Hearing Room B  
Legislative Office Building  
Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York

Good morning Chairpersons Krueger and Weinstein and distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly standing committees. I am Greg Olsen, Acting Director of the New York State Office for the Aging, and I'm honored to testify on the portions of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's proposed budget that affect older New Yorkers. Senator May, Assemblyman Bronson, I had the pleasure of meeting you earlier in the week and look forward to working with you.

Governor Cuomo's commitment to older New Yorkers is unprecedented, and New York is leading the nation in our collective approach to serve not only older New Yorkers, but families of all ages. The approach is so much broader than one agency—it is about making New York the healthiest state in the nation through a multi-agency, coordinated effort focused on improving physical and behavioral health; implementing health care deterrent strategies; and much more. Utilizing the 2019-2024 State Prevention Agenda as the umbrella, and instituting a Health Across all Policies approach, all New York State agencies are incorporating health considerations into our planning, programs, and initiatives. We have been charged to work together and consider how all of our policies further the Governor's commitment as the first age-friendly state. This approach will have a significant positive impact on our state's older population.

Under the Governor's leadership, New York State became the first state in the nation to receive the designation as an age friendly state by AARP and the World Health Organization because we rank high in the eight domains of age friendly communities, and we have a comprehensive plan to systematically build age friendly and smart growth principles into how government operates and functions. We are truly leading the nation in our collaborative and thoughtful approach.

The 2020 Executive Budget must be viewed in the context of previous budgets, which have set the foundation for significant improvements in service delivery for older adults across agencies, and each year builds upon the previous year's successes. Governor Cuomo's executive budgets for the past several years have enhanced our state's commitment to older New Yorkers and their families including:

- Launching and now implementing a long-term care planning council to prepare a strategic plan to meet the emerging needs of New York's aging population over the next decade;
- Recently issuing age-friendly Executive Order #190 that directs state agencies to consider the impact of their policies and procurements on health and healthy aging, aligned with the eight domains of an age-friendly community; and
- Providing funding to counties to become certified as an age friendly community under the AARP/WHO process; replicating Executive Order #190 at the county level; and creating Age Friendly Regional Technical Centers of Excellence.

The 2020 Executive Budget not only maintains funding for core programs from previous years, but significantly invests in services that are known to be effective and are currently unable to serve eligible individuals due to funding limitations. The Executive Budget:

- Invests \$15 million to address personal care, home delivered meals, case management and other services as a response to locally identified needs;
- Authorizes NYSOFA to develop a private pay market to increase our ability to serve more individuals of all income levels and ensuring consumers a professional, objective network of providers only seeking to sell autonomy and objectivity;
- Baselines \$4 million to the NORC program;
- Maintains additional CSE funding in the amount of \$1,129,000;
- Increases the state's commitment to the NY Connects system, providing additional resources to county offices for the aging and independent living center partners;
- Provides funding to bring in house our statewide effort to expand evidence-based interventions such as chronic disease self-management, diabetes self-management, and fall prevention programs, among others; and
- Provides additional opportunities to provide state certification and standardized skills-based training to aging services network staff.

This truly historic Executive Budget proposal will help thousands of older New Yorkers maintain their autonomy and independence, support loved ones who care for them, reduce future Medicaid costs, and continue to demonstrate why New York is the first age friendly state in the nation.

The State Office for the Aging does not stop there—we understand the need to continually do more to meet new and emerging needs, and through various partnerships, we work to meet these needs. Through innovative partnerships with foundations, community partners, and our own efforts, we are expanding services and testing new delivery models. These include:

- Piloting home sharing based on the successful Home Share Vermont model;
- Implementing the Aging Mastery Program (AMP) evidence-based intervention to develop sustainable behaviors across many dimensions that lead to improved health, stronger economic security, enhanced well-being, and increased societal participation;
- Working with the Department of Health to design a clear pathway for inclusion of aging network service contracting in the state's efforts around payment reform through value based payments;

- Partnering with NYSERDA to target low-and moderate-income households to improve energy efficiency and to save money, which could be used for other needs and reduce the risk from using old or outdated equipment and products;
- Piloting volunteer transportation programs in rural areas to support dialysis treatments, cancer screenings, and physician visits;
- Working with the Village to Village network and the Albany Guardian Society to seed local village movements that organize neighbors helping neighbors and building a regional Village Technical Assistance Center;
- Working to expand respite options for caregivers through partnerships to expand the Respite Education and Support Tools (REST) model statewide; and
- Partnering with Boston University's Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research (CADER) to offer over 20 standardized certifications and skills based, measurable trainings to network staff to improve performance.

NYSOFA will continue to engage state agencies, not-for-profits, and other community-based organizations to serve New York's older population as effectively as possible.

Thank you; I am happy to answer any questions.