



9549 Koger Blvd, Suite 100, St. Petersburg, FL 33702 • 727-570-9696 • www.aaapp.org

March 31, 2017

The Honorable Legislator
Address, etc

Dear Representative or Senator **Name:**

I am writing to enlist your support for the seniors in your district. Seniors voters make up approximately 30% of the individuals in your district. Most are active and contributing members of the community. However, we are well aware that many are just one significant health issue away from needing support to remain in the community. The rising cost of in-home care means many expend all of their resources, and still continue to need care.

As the Area Agency on Aging for Pasco and Pinellas counties, we hear from seniors when they are in need. The state funding that we receive through Community Care for the Elderly, Alzheimer's Disease Initiative, and Home Care for the Elderly programs, helps many people and enables them to remain in the community. It also supports overwhelmed caregivers and enables them to keep their family member at home.

From a caregiver of a client with Alzheimer's Disease

It is with great humility and bountiful appreciation, that I write to you and share a brief glimpse of how your organization, as well as those who represent you, have changed the quality and dignity of my mother's life, as well as the family that loves and cares for her, here in our home.... We are all working together like a village, a community. I'm doing my part here and my community immediately came to my aid. Together we can accomplish some pretty amazing good things! Know that we could not have made it without you ALL! I was very much on the brink, my despair was unprecedented.

However, there is not sufficient funding to meet all of the needs, and so we have waiting lists for these programs.

Client on the waiting list

Mrs B is 85 years old. Due to recent health issues she is able to walk using a walker, but needs assistance getting in and out of bed. She needs supervision with bathing, dressing, and managing her medications. She needs nutrition assistance as she cannot shop and she can only warm things in the microwave and toaster oven. The only activity that she can do independently is using the telephone. She lives alone and does not have a caregiver. She needs assistance to avoid nursing home placement.

Some of the people on the waiting list could remain at home with support, but without help, they may be placed in a nursing home under Medicaid. Nearly all seniors prefer to remain at home, and it is much less expensive for the State of Florida taxpayers to provide in-home support with services such as meals and help with bathing and dressing, than it is to place the client in a nursing home under Medicaid.

I know that you are concerned about the seniors in your district and throughout the state, and so I urge you, during the 2017 Legislative Session, to continue to fund the work of the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas. Please provide funds for the Community Care for the Elderly, Alzheimer's Disease Initiative, and Home Care for the Elderly programs to enable those currently in need, those who are one fall or one diagnosis away from needing help, and for the caregivers who are desperate for help to keep their loved ones at home.

Sincerely,

C. Christopher Comstock, President
Board of Directors
Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.



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April 12, 2017

The Honorable Marco Rubio
U.S. Senate
5201 W. Kennedy Blvd., Ste 530
Tampa, FL 33609

Dear Senator Rubio:

As the Congressional Subcommittees meet and consider the FY 2018 appropriations in the coming months, the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. (AAAPP) urges you to prioritize Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs that help older Americans get the support they need to age successfully at home and in their communities. We face an unprecedented and long-term shift in the composition of our country's age demographics ushered in by the maturing of America's baby boomer generation. By 2030, 73 million—or one in five—people in America will be 65 or older.

The choices about where to direct limited federal resources will determine whether we, as a country, are sufficiently prepared to support older adults and caregivers in their homes and communities where they want to be. Allowing current home and community-based services (HCBS) resources to erode, puts older adults at risk of much more expensive medical and long-term care services paid for by Medicare and Medicaid. To this end, we urge you to:

- Reject further cuts to non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs and protect **Older Americans Act (OAA)** and other critical aging services from further funding erosion.
- Support funding for OAA programs that, at a minimum, meets the levels that received bipartisan support in the 2016 reauthorization.
- Protect funding for the **State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs)**, which provides direct support to Medicare beneficiaries struggling to make cost effective choices in their Medicare coverage.
- Support the **OAA's Title V** (the Senior Community Services Employment Program).
- Protect and support the **LIHEAP** (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) which provides assistance to low-income households, including those with persons aged 60 or older to manage and meet their immediate home heating and/or cooling needs, as well as provide for energy crises.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is the cornerstone of the nation's non-Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) system, providing older adults with much-needed support including in-home care, congregate and home-delivered meals, adult day care, information and referral/assistance, transportation, legal services and caregiver support. Such services are in high demand but have very limited federal resources. OAA funding has not kept pace with inflation or the growing population eligible for services, which has made it increasingly difficult for the Aging Network to even maintain existing services, let alone meet escalating need. As a result, waiting lists are long and growing.

While we understand the difficult fiscal constraints under which you are operating, we hope you will make every effort in FY 2018 to prevent the erosion of, and reinforce commitment to, innovative, efficient and cost-effective programs that enable older Americans to live at home and in their communities for as long as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

C. Christopher Comstock
President--Board of Directors
Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.

