



AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
AGING NETWORK NEWS
Week of June 10, 2016

In-home services will get a boost . . . next fiscal year, thanks to a \$2.5 million appropriation added by Michigan lawmakers to the budget of the Aging & Adult Services Agency (AASA). The addition was celebrated by the Silver Key Coalition, 40+ groups advocating to make Michigan a No Wait State for in-home services. The monies will be used to assist some of the 7,000 seniors on waiting lists. (The Coalition requested \$5 million to serve the list.) The increase was especially sweet given the last minute budget cuts required by a disappointing Revenue Estimating Conference report.

In fact, most Long Term Care line items were pared back compared with earlier draft versions of the Health & Human Services budget. These include Long Term Care Services (primarily nursing homes), Home Help, PACE and the MI Choice Waiver. (Note: the February 12, 2016 edition of this newsletter reported a \$281 million increase for nursing homes. This hike was primarily due to a funding transfer from the Integrated Care demonstration line item and does not represent new spending.)

Michigan's successful Nursing Facility Transition Initiative (NFTI) got a special nod in the budget bill – HB 5294 – with boilerplate Section 1873 allowing the state to use funds from the Long Term Care Services line item to maintain the Housing and Outreach Staff essential to operating the NFTI program. Funding for those positions was eliminated this year by the federal government. The NFTI program identifies people living in nursing homes who want to return home, and provides the services and supports they need to make the transition. Since many people living in nursing homes have lost their own home, the NFTI program will help them find and furnish a new home. Michigan's NFTI program is a stand out. Since it began in 2005, over 12,000 nursing home residents on Medicaid have returned home or been moved to a new home. In the last five years, over 1,600 nursing home residents have been transitioned each year. The program is run by MI Choice Waiver agents, including 14 Area Agencies on Aging, and Centers for Independent Living/Disability Networks.

The effort to legalize marijuana in Michigan . . . suffered a major setback this week, when the State Board of Canvassers ruled that MILEgalize failed to collect the necessary number of signatures to put the issue on the November ballot. The group plans to file a lawsuit challenging the decision.

In Washington, D.C. this week . . . the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its Labor-Health & Human Services spending bill for next fiscal year, which provides level funding for core Older Americans Act programs like meals and social services. However, the Committee is recommending cuts to Title V (senior employment) and Title VI (Native American programs), and the total elimination of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). Michigan's SHIP is known as MMAP Inc. (Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program). It is important to note that with limited session days remaining for Congress, a Continuing Resolution or omnibus bill are the most likely scenarios for the federal budget, rather than stand-alone spending bills (such as the bill referenced above).