

Assembly Committee on Ways and Means
Senate Committee on Human Services/CIP
March 16, 2011

Committee Chairwoman Debbie Smith
Committee Members

For the Record:
Connie McMullen,
Chair, Strategic Plan Account Ability Committee for Seniors

I am here today on behalf of the Strategic Plan Accountability Committee regarding the Aging and Disability Services Division Budget for the upcoming biennium. First I would like to compliment ADSD Administrator Carol Sala and her staff, who have worked very hard to serve the states most vulnerable and yet comply with program eliminations and caseload reductions over the past two sessions. Having said that, SPAC voted March 11 that there be testimony read into the record regarding the proposed budget and in part the Health Care Financing and Policy Budget that impacts Aging and Disability Services.

- While there is much gratitude in the \$86 million in Add Backs in the Governor's Recommended Budget, budget reductions for providers is a serious concern. Although the waiver programs remain flat, which in itself is disappointing, there is a concern regarding the 15% reduction in Home & Community Based Services, Adult Group Care and Disability waiver rates. We believe this will have significant impacts on delivery and access to care. ADSD waivers provide homemaker, personal care, the Personal Emergency Response System, chore services, respite and adult day care services. Over 409 providers will be impacted statewide.
- Regarding the Elder Protective Service Program, there is a concern regarding the cost shift to the counties totaling \$2 million over the biennium. There is an assumption that the counties have the funds to reimburse to finance these essential services for the most vulnerable.
- Changing the formula on the County Match Program for the Aged, Blind and Disabled needing Institutional Care, totaling \$37 million over the biennium. Again there is an assumption that funds will be provided for nursing home care for those most in need of it.
- Elimination of the Senior Citizens Property Tax Assistance Program; while the funds will be reverted back to the general fund, there are concerns regarding the 16,222 seniors who will not receive a rebate and who may need and have counted on it.
- A BDR to change the funding formula of the Tobacco Settlement to fund services previously funded with one shot money. While these programs are important, as in previous sessions, sweeping a significant amount of the settlement to finance any budget gap is a serious concern.

- And lastly, elimination of optional services in Medicaid such as non-medical vision.

SPAC has been advocating and measuring goals for the states aging and disability community since 2002 and has measured the states progress in meeting those needs. We have serious concerns regarding the states direction for our seniors and disability communities, and thank you for allowing us to address it.