

CCoA
California Commission on Aging

AGEWATCH

Older Americans Act Reauthorization passed by Congress!

The House of Representatives on Monday passed the Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2016, an amended version of the OAA reauthorization (S.192) which passed the Senate in July 2015. The bill was brought to the floor by Reps. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) and it was passed under suspension of the rules unanimously.

Occurring eight months after the 2015 White House Conference on Aging and the Senate's passage of the bill, the House's unanimous approval comes 10 years after the last OAA reauthorization. The current legislation, which was amended by the House and now requires a concurring vote by the Senate, assures the continuation of vital Older Americans Act programs and authorizes higher appropriations for many, including elderly nutrition programs. An early summary from the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers (NANASP) highlighted the following provisions in the House's reauthorization bill:

- “(a call) for greater utilization of registered dietitians in the nutrition programs.
- (a call) for the use of locally-grown foods in meal programs where feasible, as well as the identification of potential partnerships and contracts with local producers and providers of locally-grown foods.
- Retaining the National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging.
- Strengthening the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and updates coordination between SCSEP and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Using grant funding to deliver oral health screenings to older adults.
- Calling for improved and more person-centered transportation services.
- Emphasizing elder abuse prevention, including improved training for states, area agencies on aging, and service providers on elder abuse prevention and screening.
- Requiring the Assistant Secretary for Aging to identify model programs and to provide information and technical assistance to states, area agencies on aging, and service providers to support the modernization of multipurpose senior centers.
- Clarifying the National Family Caregiver Support Program's eligibility language to include older adults who are caring for adult children with disabilities and raising children under 18.
- Continuing to emphasize evidence-based support.”

As reported by NANASP, the organization's past chair (and CCoA Vice Chair) Paul Downey was present in the House gallery for the vote, and Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA) discussed the work of Downey's organization, Serving Seniors, during the floor debate. Since the bill was changed by the House, the new House version must now be passed by the Senate.

Excerpts from NANASP Washington Bulletin, *NANASP Supports House Reauthorization of OAA*, March 18, 2016, and NANASP Washington Bulletin, *House Passes Older Americans Act Reauthorization*, March 21, 2016.

AGE WATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834. (916) 419-7591

www.ccoa.ca.gov

California Budget & Policy Center brief: SSI/SSP grants fall short for meeting seniors' basic needs

A new fact sheet from the non-partisan California Budget & Policy Center (CBPC) examines the support currently provided by SSI/SSP grants and shows that they fall short of allowing seniors and people with disabilities to afford housing, food, and other basic costs of living. This is of particular concern given that SSI/SSP recipients are not eligible to receive federal food assistance through CalFresh, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in California.

Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) grants are a critical source of basic income for more than 1 million seniors and people with disabilities in California. However, state policymakers in recent years reduced SSI/SSP grants in order to address budget shortfalls during and after the Great Recession. The CBPC fact sheet also highlights ways that state policymakers can boost investment in SSI/SSP grants to better help low-income seniors and people with disabilities make ends meet.

The CBPC brief recommends building on the Governor's proposed SSI/SSP cost-of-living increase with a long-range plan to raise beneficiaries above the poverty line, as well as to increase affordable housing and increase funding for state-supported nutrition programs. To read the brief in full, visit calbudgetcenter.org.

Excerpted from the California Budget & Policy Center Fact Sheet, *Cost of Rent and Food Highlights Inadequacy of SSI/SSP Grants for Seniors and People With Disabilities in California*, March 2016.





Save the Date

Celebrate Older Americans Month
at the

SENIOR RALLY DAY

On May 11th at the State Capitol





Lunch and water provided

More details to follow, so mark your calendars now!

Long-term Care Financing Collaborative Releases Final Report

The Long-term Care Financing Collaborative released their final report outlining their proposals for reforming the current LTC system. The Collaborative is a group of experts in financing as well as delivery of long-term services and supports, and includes individuals from a wide range of organizations such as those that provide consumer advocacy, research, policy, financing, and service delivery. Membership also includes former members of Republican and Democratic administrations. The final report builds upon prior work and publications, and includes the following recommendations:

- Creation of a universal program for all individuals that would cover catastrophic care for individuals with high needs over an extended timeframe;
- Developing public policies in cooperation with the private insurance market to help support financing for individuals with LTSS needs that do not meet the level required for the catastrophic care benefit, including innovations with leveraging retirement savings and home equity;
- Enhancing Medicaid LTSS services, and increasing flexibility to provide greater access to care in the most appropriate setting for each individual;
- Increasing supports for family and community supports, that may include unpaid caregivers, as well increasing integration between medical interventions and long-term services and supports.

The full report is available at NASUAD.org.

Reprinted from NASUAD Friday Updates, February 26, 2016.

State Legislature Passes New MCO Tax, Rescues Over \$1 Billion for Medi-Cal

The California legislature (this month) approved a new health care tax, capping a months-long quest to safeguard over \$1 billion in annual Medi-Cal funding the federal government had threatened to take away. The three-year tax on managed care organizations is expected to bring in nearly \$1.4 billion a year to fund Medi-Cal, the state-federal government health program for people with low incomes.

Although the new tax will be imposed on a wider group of health plans than the tax it replaces, it is expected to reduce the overall fiscal liability of insurers by \$106 million, according to calculations by legislative analysts. That's because the higher amount of tax initially received by the state will draw more federal dollars than under the current system, and those funds will help pay for reimbursements and breaks on other taxes that will significantly reduce the real cost to insurers.

The old tax, which expires June 30, has been imposed only on managed care plans in the Medi-Cal business. The new tax will be levied on all managed care plans. And to offset the cost to insurers, the plan gives them \$371 million in breaks on the state premiums and corporation taxes.

The new managed care tax is part of a package that also includes funding for people with developmental disabilities, skilled nursing facilities and retiree health care.

To read the full article, visit California Healthline.

Reprinted in part from California Healthline article by [David Gorn](#) March 1, 2016

California Commission on Aging

Marian Last, Chair, Rossmoor

Paul Downey, Vice Chair San Diego

Commissioners

Donna Benton, Los Angeles

Betsy Butler, Marina del Rey

Steven Castle, Los Angeles

Julie Conger, Sonoma

Lucille Fisher, San Francisco

Stuart Greenbaum, Sacramento

Barbara Mitchell, Riverside

Gail Nickerson, Granite Bay

Robert Petty, Monterey

Kathy Randall, San Diego

Carmen Reyes, Whittier

Jane Rozanski, Camarillo

Rita Saenz, Sacramento

David Sanchez, San Francisco

Jean Schuldberg, Chico

Ed Walsh, Rancho Mirage

President's 2017 FY budget proposal meets mixed reviews by aging advocates

The President's budget request for the 2017 fiscal year would increase funding for Older Americans Act programs, supportive services, Alzheimer's disease research, and elder justice initiatives. Released February, the Administration's proposal would also increase older adult access to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, as well as increase funding for Lifespan Respite Care, Aging & Disability Resource Centers and Title VI Native American programs.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) reports that cuts to critical programs are also part of the President's proposal, including \$90 million from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, higher Medicare co-pays and deductibles and higher deductibles for brand name prescription drugs.

Some of the highlights include:

Older Americans Act increases

\$10 million more for Supportive Services

\$14 million more total for Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Programs

\$2 million more for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

Other increases for vulnerable individuals

\$2 million more for the **Elder Justice Initiative** (although significantly less than the \$25 million requested for FY16)

\$2 million more for the Lifespan Respite Care Program

\$14 million more for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

\$10 million for a new initiative to improve senior access to the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP)

\$72 million more for Section 202 Housing for the Elderly

To read the full NCOA summary, visit www.ncoa.org.

Information from NCOA Week, *What's in the President's Budget*, February 9, 2016.



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 29 - 30, 2016. California Commission on Aging, Davis, CA. [Www.ccoa.ca.gov](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov) for information.

May 10 - 11, 2016. Triple-A Council of California, Sacramento, CA. [Www.4tacc.org](http://www.4tacc.org) for information.

April 7, 2016. Jewish Community Center of San Francisco's Art of Aging Gracefully Resource Fair. www.jccsf.org/aginggracefully for more information

May 11, 2016. Senior Rally Day, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA. (916) 319-3990 for information.

July 24 - 28, 2016, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging Annual Conference, San Diego, California. Information and registration at <http://www.n4a.org/conference>.

California Commission on Aging staff:
Sandra Fitzpatrick, M.A., Executive Director
Carol Sewell, Legislative Director
Marcella Villanueva, Administrative Assistant