

THE ADVOCATE

June 2010

OLDER MICHIGANIANS DAY Celebrated at the State Capitol

On June 10, 2010, nearly seven hundred seniors and advocates rallied together on the lawn of the State Capitol urging support of the Older Michiganians Day 2010 Platform for Legislative Action. AAA Region 1-B was represented by over 160 participants who took the message, "Don't Cut Seniors Out!", to their legislators, meeting to discuss how to balance the state's budget without cutting funding for the critical programs and services that preserve the independence of Michigan's older adults and adults with disabilities.



Advocates from Washtenaw County are given a tour of the Capitol from Senator Liz Brater

In addition to individual meetings with their lawmakers, seniors had the opportunity to witness the legislature in action on their behalf as Senator Jason Allen and Representative Andy Neumann rescheduled their committee hearings to coincide with Older Michiganians Day. The House Senior Health, Security and Retirement Committee heard testimony on a package of elder abuse bills, and the Senate Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs Committee discussed legislation to promote the development of "elder friendly" cities, townships, and counties. Staff from the AAA 1-B testified in support of these bills.



Advocates from around the state listen to legislators on the Capitol lawn



Monroe Seniors and Advocates pose inside the State Capitol

STATE'S AGING SERVICES BUDGET IN CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

The Michigan Department of Community Health Budget (SB 1152), which includes funding for Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) and the MI Choice Medicaid Waiver program, is now being considered in a joint House-Senate Conference Committee. Individually, the Senate approved an 8% (\$2.3 million) cut in funding to OSA and increased funding for the MI Choice Medicaid Waiver Program from \$20 million to \$196 million. The House recommended no OSA cuts for 2011 and approved an increase in MI Choice funding to \$190 million. However, it was recently announced that there is a FY 2010 budget deficit because Michigan Business Tax refunds have been much higher than anticipated. The legislature may take funds thought to be available for FY 2011 to close this year's budget gap, prompting additional FY 2011 budget cuts.

Your advocacy is needed to convince committee members that OSA-funded home and community-based care can save Medicaid money by preventing unnecessary nursing home placement. Last year, \$4 million in OSA services for the most at-risk clients saved Medicaid \$140 million, according to OSA reports.

Members of the Conference Committee

Sen. Roger Kahn	(866) 305-2132	senrkahn@senate.michigan.gov
Sen. John Pappageorge	(877) 736-1384	senjpappageorge@senate.michigan.gov
Sen. Deb Cherry	(866) 305-2126	sendcherry@senate.mi.gov
Rep. Gary McDowell	(888) 737-4279	garymcdowell@house.mi.gov
Rep. George Cushingberry, Jr.	(888) 347-8008	georgecushingberry@house.mi.gov
Rep. Kevin Green	(866) 538-4677	kevingreen@house.mi.gov

AAA 1-B URGES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT *FMAP* EXTENSION

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) included an enhanced Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentages (FMAP) match to help states struggling to fund their Medicaid programs during these lean budget times. The enhanced rate is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2010.

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B has asked its Congressional delegation to act immediately to extend the FMAP by voting yes on HR 4213.

The state FY 2011 budget proposals submitted by the Governor and passed by the legislature include reduced spending, reforms, *and additional funding of \$514 million provided by the FMAP extension*. If the current budget proposal is adopted, Michigan's Office of Services to the Aging will have lost one-quarter of its state funding over the past two years. Allowing FMAP to expire will lead to even deeper cuts to the programs that prevent reliance on Medicaid and meet the most basic of needs: home-delivered meals and in-home support services.



The Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) is a nonprofit agency serving the needs of older adults in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties. For more information about the Senior Advocacy Network (SAN) or to receive future editions of The Advocate, contact Ann Langford at (248) 262-1282 or by email at alangford@aaa1b.com.