



Vermont
Association of
Area Agencies
on Aging

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Member Agencies:

Age Well
Central Vermont Council on Aging
Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging
Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
Senior Solutions

To: The Senate Appropriations Committee
From: Janet Hunt, Executive Director Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Re: FY 2019 Budget Priorities
Date: 3/29/18

I want to offer the following thoughts on the FY 2019 budget on behalf the Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A).

We appreciate the House's decision to include a 2% increase for Home and Community Based providers in the Choices for Care Program in their proposed budget. We hope the Senate will agree to the House's proposal. Home and Community Based Providers are the core of the Choices for Care program, yet they do not receive reasonable annual rate increases for their services. The Choices for Care program has clearly demonstrated savings **and** that Older Vermonters want to remain in their homes as the primary option for receiving long term services and supports. Vermont statutes require reasonable annual rate increases for nursing home based providers, but do not provide this same automatic increase to Home and Community Based providers. For many years this has occurred while the community based service providers have received little to no increase for a program that has grown dramatically. We request that the Senate include a 2% increase for Home and Community Based Providers, as well as the language found in H.284 that would require reasonable annual increases for these providers.

In addition, we request that the Senate fund home delivered meals in the Choices for Care program. Choices for Care covers the cost of meals for program participants in nursing homes but does not cover the cost of meals for participants who receive services at home. In 2017 the state estimated it could cover every Choices for Care participant who currently receives home delivered meals for approximately \$190,000.[i] This investment could provide an additional 76,822 meals for older Vermonters in need and draw down an additional \$233,000 in federal funds to the state. This would create parity in the whole Choices for Care system of services.

We also support the House's decision to codify language regarding savings in the Choices for Care program. This language is largely based on proposed language from the Agency of Human Services with modifications proposed by the House Human Services Committee. We request the Senate concur with the House's proposal to include this language in the budget.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[i] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/H.875-HDM-CFC-Legislative-Reportcg-DRAFT-SHandCG-edits.pdf>