

From: Liz Vogel <LVogel@agewellvt.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 5, 2018 4:12 PM
To: Claire Ayer <CAyer@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: Age Well: 2019 Budget Priorities / & Introduction

Dear Senator Ayer,

I am writing on behalf of Age Well, Vermont's largest Area Agencies on Aging, serving Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle counties.

As an organization dedicated to providing support and services to Vermonters over the age of 60, in need of home care services, nutritional support, or guidance on health insurance, transportation and referrals, we are passionate about your support of two bills before you as they move to Appropriations:

H.284 adequately reimburses Home and Community-based providers who help older Vermonters remain in their homes as they age. We hope the Senate will agree to the House's proposal to include a 2% increase for Home and Community based providers who are at the core of the Choices for Care program. Currently 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. As more and more Vermonters desire to, and need to, age at home, this increase will directly affect the quality of care they will receive.

H.434 would cover the costs for Meals on Wheels for Medicaid recipients. Again, Vermont's Choices for Care covers the costs of meals for Medicaid residents if they are in a nursing facility, but *not* for those that are living at home. In 2017 the state estimated it could cover every Choices for Care participant who currently receives home delivered meals for only \$190,000. 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.

In addition to these two bills, I would also like to introduce myself to you as the interim CEO for Age Well. Directly related to the two bills mentioned above, Age Well is probably best known for providing Meals on Wheels to older Vermonters in our four counties. After delivering meals for 44 years, and with a demand for services that has increased by almost 35% in recent years, Age Well has recently evolved and innovated the Meals on Wheels program to be able to offer a variety of therapeutic meals that better meet dietary and health needs. We now offer more choice, higher quality, and consistencies in food preparation and safety that we weren't able to before. We believe we have created a cornerstone model for the program that could be an example throughout the state, and country, to better meet the needs of an aging population.

I would like to set up a time to meet with you in person at the State House, to introduce myself, but more importantly to briefly share with you how Age Well is moving the needle on caring for our aging population and provide you with talking points to assist you in engaging in conversations, like the ones about the house bills noted above.

I am happy to come to Montpelier and if you would let me know a day and time that might be convenient for you, I will be there.

You can reach me at lvogel@agewellvt.org or on my mobile, 802.497.4582.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Liz

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