

Why more funds need to be allocated to programs for the aging Vermonters.

Vermont's public policy declares that Vermont should be the best state to grow old in. As the second oldest state in the Union we are growing our aging population sector at an increasing rate. Our workforce population is leaving the state while the 60+ group is becoming a major demographic.

While the number of older Vermonters is growing, the funding through the Older Americans Act has remained relatively stagnant since 1985. Supplying home delivered meals in 2019 with funds allocated more than 3 decades ago is just not logical. The population growth and food insecurity have expanded exponentially for our older Vermonters. The rural landscape leaves many of them without access to healthcare, transportation and the means to prepare their own food. Without proper nutrition their health declines and they require more in home meal provisions not less. Add to this the increase in medical costs to offset the poor nutrition and you get a circle of poverty, hunger, ill health and depression. This is not only sad but adds to the state's costs.

We want to provide access to health and wellness to aging Vermonters. Nutrition plays an important role. It keeps people from developing illnesses. Congregate Meals and Meals on Wheels provides more than food. The social contact and personal touch by meal deliveries help keep an eye on this vulnerable portion of our population.

This is a segment of our population who will never march on the state house in Montpelier. Many will never write to their legislators. Others have never and never will ask for help. They think others need it more. This does not mean that they deserve to be forgotten!

Many older Vermonters have lived all their lives working and helping in their communities. Our volunteer groups are made of mostly those over 60. Some of them have had the farms that we so proudly use in our tourism campaigns. They raised their families, built the schools, and paid taxes. How do we repay them for all they have done for us?

1. Increase re-imburements to meal providers
2. Cover the cost of home delivered meals for our Choices for Care participants. (H.187)
3. Increase rates for home and community based long-term care providers w/ a guaranteed annual increase. (H.189)

Let's keep our promise,

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