



Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2

40 West Second Street, Suite 400 Dayton, OH 45402-1873

937-341-3000 or 1-800-258-7277 FAX 937-341-3005

<http://www.info4seniors.org>

Douglas McGarry, Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE Ohio House Children and Human Services Committee

Nicole Khaner, Assistant Director
Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2
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Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the Children and Human Services Committee, I am Nicole Khaner, Assistant Director of the Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2.

The Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2 serves nine counties in Ohio's west central region, including Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Preble and Shelby counties. The west central region of Ohio serves both rural and urban communities. The area is home to 295,299 older adults over the age of 60, accounting for 10% of Ohio's total population of older adults in the nine county region. Our Area Agency on Aging serves over 6500 older adults on a daily basis with managing their home and community based services. These home and community based services include providing answers to questions on aging services, community resources, caring for a loved one, to a home delivered meal or personal care assistance.

In the Ohio Department of Aging's FY 2026 and 2027 executive budget request, Director McElroy testified before this committee for supporting healthy aging via Senior

Community Services, supporting home and community based waiver programs and sustaining its workforce, and increasing the personal needs allowance, among others. We support all of these recommendations and we implore the House of Representatives to include them all in House Bill 96.

My focus today is to request the general assembly consider an increase to the Senior Community Services line item by an additional \$10 million dollars per fiscal year. In 2024, we served over 600 older adults in our nine county region with Senior Community Service dollars which provided services such as home repairs, home modifications, transportation, personal care assistance and home delivered meals. These service dollars are just one option to provide resources for those who want to remain in their home but are not eligible for costlier options such as Medicaid or nursing home care. Historically, this funding has been cut or remained stagnant. It has not been until recent years we have seen some restoration in funding. However, lengthy waiting lists for individuals remain.

As you have heard from others in previous testimony, our State received a jolt in investment in the last biennium with the one-time approval of \$40 million in Healthy Aging grants. In our region, these dollars afforded the ability for counties to facilitate transportation pilots, increase congregate meal opportunities and provide home delivered meals, purchase software to link older adults to aides seeking to provide service and provide wellness programs such as how to combat chronic health issues, in addition to many others. The only funding which provides this type of innovative and

flexible programming in the Ohio Department of Aging's current budget is Senior Community Services.

Our region represents about 10% of the State of Ohio's 60 and over population, therefore based on the required funding formula, roughly 9% of the State's Senior Community Services award comes to the region. With the requested funding increase, our funding could increase from \$724,000 to about \$1.5 million dollars. These additional dollars could:

- Eliminate current waiting lists
- Expand home repair and modifications to provide 200 jobs versus the 60 jobs provided in 2024
- Expand home and community based options for those not eligible for Medicaid with services such as personal care and home delivered meals. We could increase those served to almost 2000 in our region versus the 600 we served in 2024.

Flexibility in funding is critical as we continue to see our older population growing and their needs changing. Our Agency receives over 24,000 calls a year from individuals seeking information and resources on long term care services for either themselves or a loved one. At least 60% of those callers surveyed indicate they have never called or contacted our Agency before. Without increases in funding, these new requests and needs will go unmet.

We urge you to consider an additional \$10 million dollars in Senior Community Services in House Bill 96.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.