



Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 19, 2019
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Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging: Response to Governor's Veto Message

We appreciate the General Assembly's inclusion of specific investments to support older Ohioans and people with disabilities. These include the rate increases for PASSPORT personal care services and assisted living waiver, and promoting parity in care with the indexing of Medicaid rates for personal care services for home and community-based services to the same indexed rate increases for nursing homes.

Although the Governor vetoed these initiatives, we believe in his commitment to pursue administrative solutions and look forward to working with the Ohio Departments of Aging and Medicaid to advance these initiatives so that all Ohioans can have access to the full range of support as we age.

No matter our age or abilities, we are entitled to be treated as full members of our communities. We understand that our state has many priorities that must be met. It is time for Ohio to look toward the future as an "age-friendly" state.

Home and community-based Medicaid waiver programs are cost-effective options for older Ohioans and Ohioans with disabilities to live healthy, engaged, secure lives in their homes and communities. It is where most people want to be. However, our members are experiencing critical challenges in finding personal care aides to provide services in these programs. Providers are dropping out as a result and they are not easily replaced. They face low rates, staffing shortages and economic forces that combine to make the business model unsustainable for them to continue.

Ohio's system is set up for a continuum of care, with the provision of cost effective services at home to assisted living waiver options to full skilled nursing care. However, without the ability to provide personal care services in the community settings because of a lack of providers, eligible participants are turned away or disenrolled, or go immediately to the full skilled nursing care when that is not necessarily what they need or want.

At its current rate of investment in this continuum, Ohio has an unsustainable model for long term services and supports, putting our state's fiscal health and the health of all of us as we age, at great risk. Realigning Ohio's investment so that we have parity for reimbursement for home and community-based services in line with nursing facilities is critical to putting Ohio on the right course.

Ohio has the 6th largest population age 65 or older in the nation, and our ranks will continue to grow. By 2030, Ohio's population age 65 and older will increase by 40% compared to 2015. These are issues that need immediate attention.