



**COUNTY OF NASSAU  
DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR CITIZEN AFFAIRS**

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**NYS Division of Budget Long Island Town Hall Hearing  
Friday, November 30, 2007**

Good morning! My name is Margaret Posteraro and I am representing Dr. Sharon Mullon, Commissioner of the Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views concerning the NYS 2008/09 Executive Budget.

The dramatic increase of older persons in this County has created a greater demand for services. Each year we receive more and more requests for home delivered meals, case management, home care, social day programs and respite. If we intend to reduce the high cost of institutional placement in residential care facilities and nursing homes, we need to provide comprehensive community-based services to keep our elderly in their homes. A recent study found that the out of pocket cost of a family caring for an elderly person averages about \$5,500 a year, almost double the previous estimates but still a far cry from the cost of a nursing home. Accordingly, funds to serve the seniors in their homes and in community settings must increase to meet the demand and higher costs for service provision. In addition, there must be recognition of higher expenses for services in suburban areas, like Nassau County.

The 2007/08 Executive Budget provided \$49,972,000 for the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) with a local match of 25%. We propose a \$25 million dollar increase over two fiscal years—\$15 million in 2008/09 and \$10 million in 2009/10 with a permanently reduced local match of 10%. Providing \$20 million for services and \$5 million for planning and implementation funds would allow the Area Agencies on Aging to expand case management services and in-home supports for the frailest elderly who represent the fastest growing cohort.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) should be increased by \$5 million to \$24,209,000. This would allow Area Agencies to keep up with inflation as well as increased need. Last summer—in just one month—one of our five home delivered meals providers received more than 80 requests for service.

The additional COLA in 2007/08 for EISEP, SNAP, and CSE was greatly appreciated and enabled us to recruit and retain workers and assist contracted agencies in meeting rising energy costs. As energy costs continue to spiral upward, additional COLA funds will help the Area Agencies to maintain existing services.

Transportation remains a problem for suburban and rural counties. In Nassau County, the railroad was designed to take commuters into NYC—not for easy use by seniors. The fixed route buses are often problematic for seniors trying to carry groceries and packages or forced to make numerous transfers to reach the doctor's office. Additional transportation funds will allow the local senior center buses to provide more shopping and medical trips.

The Health Insurance, Information, Counseling, & Assistance Program (HIICAP) provides valuable Medicare Part D and Long Term Care Insurance counseling to enable the elderly to make an informed choice from among complicated plans and programs. Additional funding would greatly assist in further counseling and outreach.

In closing, we appreciate the leadership of Governor Spitzer and the New York State Office for Aging and believe that increased funding for the services mentioned is critical if elderly New Yorkers are to remain safely and with dignity in their own homes. Thank you for your past support and kind attention.

SC: Plan, NYS Division of Budget Long Island Town Hall Hearing–Mullon.11.30.07