



AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
AGING NETWORK NEWS
Week of October 9, 2015

A transportation package could be adopted . . . this month, according to House Speaker Kevin Cotter (R-Mount Pleasant). The Speaker says talks with the Senate and Governor are going well but he did not reveal any details. Cotter does not support releasing a list of cuts in the general fund before adopting the package, saying that the Legislature's Appropriation Committees should work out those details later.

Members of Congress are back in their districts next week . . . and advocates should push for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and full funding of aging programs, urges the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A). Raise your voice, using the advocacy alert embedded in this newsletter. The FY 2016 federal budget is full of landmines for programs like meals on wheels and home care, with sequestration the law of the land if Congress does nothing to change it, along with a Senate proposal to cut State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) by a whopping 42%. In Michigan, the SHIP is called the Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP).

Medicare Part B premiums are expected to jump by 52% . . . for nearly one-third of beneficiaries in 2016, according to a Medicare Trustees report released this week. On October 15th, the government will announce whether there will be a Social Security cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for next year. If the answer is no, the big premium jumps will take place, unless Congress intervenes. Because of a complicated formula that ties Part B hikes to COLAs, Medicare beneficiaries who are new to the program, not collecting Social Security, or paying higher premiums due to their income bracket will pay much more starting in January. States will also pay more since they cover the Part B premiums of beneficiaries on both Medicare and Medicaid. N4A and 70 other national groups recently sent a letter to Congress urging a legislative fix to mitigate the increases.

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AAAAM ADVOCACY ALERT
October 9, 2015

Urge Congress to Reauthorize and Fund the Older Americans Act

Background:

Members of Congress are heading home next week for one of their last district working periods this year. Take this opportunity to place two related topics on their radar screen: for House members - the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act; and for both House and Senate members – adequate funding for the Older Americans Act in 2016.

The Older Americans Act (S. 192) was unanimously passed in July by the Senate, and the bill is waiting for House action. Representatives need to hear from constituents about the importance of passing a bipartisan House bill this fall! Call their district offices (phone numbers below) and urge action this year on the Older Americans Act!

After avoiding a shutdown, Congress is now working on an agreement with the President to fund government programs next year. Congress needs to hear from constituents who are opposed to more budget cuts triggered by sequestration if Congress does nothing to stop it. The Older Americans Act and other programs for vulnerable seniors would be slashed. No more sequestration! There is also a proposal in the Senate to cut SHIP programs by 42%. Michigan's Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program would be forced to cut services to 50,000 seniors.

What you can do:

Call your member of the House and both U.S. Senators to express your views. You can use these talking points:

- Older Americans Act programs provide in-home supports to help older adults live in safety and health where they prefer – their own homes – and stay out of expensive hospitals and nursing homes.
- The Senate passed S. 192, the Older Americans Act Reauthorization bill, unanimously – it's time for the House to act. The bill expired in 2011.
- Older Americans need a budget agreement that avoids sequestration cuts to senior meals and other programs, and provides full funding for programs including SHIP.

U.S. Representatives' District Office Phone Numbers:

Justin Amash (R-Grand Rapids)	(616) 451-8383
Dan Benishek (R-Crystal Falls)	(906) 828-2114
Michael Bishop (R-Rochester)	(810) 227-8600
John Conyers (D-Detroit)	(313) 961-5670
Debbie Dingell (D-Dearborn)	(313) 278-2936
Bill Huizenga (R-Zeeland)	(616) 414-5516
Daniel Kildee (D-Flint)	(810) 238-8627
Brenda Lawrence (D-Southfield)	(248) 356-2052
Sander Levin (D-Royal Oak)	(586) 498-7122
Candice Miller (R-Harrison Twnshp)	(586) 997-5010
John Moolenaar (R-Midland)	(989) 631-2552
Dave Trott (R-Birmingham)	(248) 528-0711
Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph)	(269) 385-0039
Tim Walberg (R-Tipton)	(517) 780-9075

U.S. Senators' District Office Phone Numbers:

Debbie Stabenow (D-Lansing)	(313) 961-4330
Gary Peters (D-Bloomfield Twnshp)	(313) 226-6020