

Governor Envisions Healthier State, More Effective State Services

The first State of the State address by Governor Rick Snyder included a number of topics which may impact the provision of home and community based services to older adults and adults with disabilities. Snyder has tasked his executive group with “vigorously pursuing improvement in our health care system” and focus on cost, quality, and access. In addition, Snyder emphasized the value of wellness and preventative care.

Planning to request a budget that is “based on outcomes and results and moves away from traditional line items,” Snyder faces a challenge to trim government costs enough to close the estimated \$1.8 billion budget deficit. He did not present budget details during the address and it is unclear whether Medicaid services or programs funded through Michigan’s Office of Services to the Aging will be impacted. The Governor is expected to release a one-year budget, with second-year recommendations on February 17.

State revenue sharing with local governments will likely be examined. Payments to localities may become tied to consolidation and service sharing, and Snyder expressed interest in paying an incentive to municipalities that successfully share services. Many community-based services that the AAA 1-B consumers rely on, such as senior centers and transportation providers are funded in part by local governments and these services may be affected if revenue sharing grants are reduced.

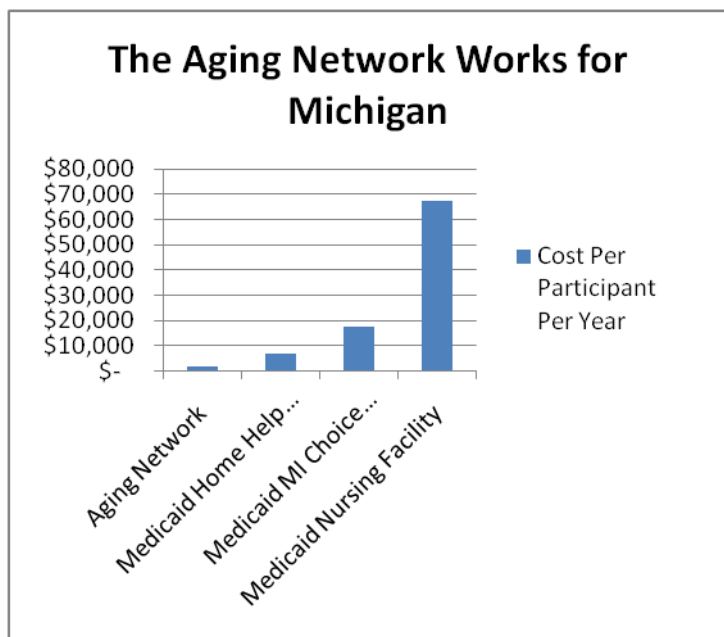
House Votes to Repeal Health Care Reform, Senate Effort Defeated

The US House of Representatives passed a bill (H.R. 2) to repeal health care reform, which is formally known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). This vote is viewed as largely symbolic, and a similar effort in the Senate was defeated. However, House Republicans who vowed to repeal the health reform law during the 2010 election campaign support the concept of health care reform and plan to draft new legislation in a series of smaller bills. Such bills will focus on lowering health care premiums, overhaul of the medical liability system, providing access to health coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, increasing the number of insured Americans, among other measures. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that repealing the ACA would increase the deficit by \$230 billion over 10 years.

The AAA 1-B supports the implementation of provisions of ACA that benefit older adults and adults with disabilities.

Aging Network Services Offer Value to Vulnerable Adults, Taxpayers

Michigan's Aging Network provides services to eligible older adults and adults with disabilities who need long term care at a *fraction* of the cost of Medicaid institutional care. Average costs per participant are as follows*:



Aging Network: \$4.72 per day

(\$1,723 per year). The Aging Network provides in-home support services and meals, to delay or prevent reliance on Medicaid.

Medicaid Home Help Program: \$18 per day

(\$6,570 per year). Medically-eligible adults receive help with daily activities such as bathing and meal preparation at home.

Medicaid MI Choice Waiver Program: \$48

per day (\$17,604 per year). Adults who qualify for nursing home care but wish to remain home and in the community receive highly skilled in-home support services.

Medicaid Nursing Facility: \$185 per day

(\$67,357 per year).

*Nursing Facility, MI Choice, and Medicaid/Home Help cost per day data based on the *Profile of Publicly-Funded LTC Services* report prepared by the Michigan Department of Community Health, Office of LTC Supports and Services (June 2009). Michigan Aging Network cost per day data is a statewide average based on service utilization and expenditure data collected as part of the FY 2009 NAPIS State Program Report.

Wellness and Prevention Becomes Part of National Strategy

One provision of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) is the creation of the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council which will develop a strategy to shift the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on wellness and prevention. The Area Agency on Aging 1-B had the opportunity to comment on the draft recommendations of the strategy document and put forth numerous suggestions, including urging support for current evidence-based health promotion and wellness programs administered through the aging services network. A summary of the AAA 1-B's recommendations are available on the Agency website, www.aaa1b.com. Click on the Advocacy tab, Senior Advocacy Issues and Positions.

To learn more about the national strategy, go to the National Prevention Council's website at www.healthcare.gov/center/councils/nphpphc/. If you would like a paper copy of the draft strategy document, contact Ann Langford, Advocacy Specialist at (248) 262-1282.

Federal and State Lawmaker Contact Information Available Online

Senior Advocacy Network members were recently sent the 2011-2012 edition of "Contact Your Michigan Legislator" and "Contact Your Congressional Representative." Online versions of these directories can also be found on the AAA 1-B website, www.aaa1b.com, under Advocacy.