

AGE: Advocacy Group for Elders Legislative Priorities for the 84th State Legislative Session



More Funding for Adult Protective Services

In Fiscal Year 2012, Adult Protective Services completed 87,487 investigations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation involving adults living at home. Of these, more than 59,595 were validated. In the last decade, the number of in-home cases investigated by Adult Protective Services has increased by 35%. With the booming growth in those 60+, Texas should increase the number of APS caseworkers.

Full Funding for Long-Term Care Ombudsmen in Assisted Living Facilities

When assisted living facilities (ALFs) were statutorily required to be licensed in 1999, people who live in ALFs were granted access to long-term care ombudsmen. Originally, the number of ALFs was far fewer than nursing homes; complaints were less frequent and less complex. Now the number of ALFs exceeds nursing homes and the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program faces a crisis. This mandate should be funded at \$1.4 million annually.

Fund Local Guardianship & Money Management Programs

In 2011, the Legislature deleted from the HHSC Budget grant funding to develop and expand local guardianship and money management programs which serve elderly and disabled Texans. The 2015 Legislature should set aside \$750,000 per year from the Medicaid Estate Recovery Program to reestablish grants to these vital programs.

Increased Funding for Senior Service Corps Programs

RSVP volunteers alone contributed to the state of Texas \$3,978,000 worth of free service Senior Corps funding has been held at level funding since FY 2008. It is recommended the 84th State Legislature supports a ten percent increase in funding (\$965K to \$1.06M) for the 2015 -2017 biennium to maintain and further expand the program.

Increase Medicaid Reimbursement for Health Care Providers

Texas is underfunding Medicaid. This is threatening the quality of health and long-term care in Texas. Approximately 115,000 elderly Texans rely on Medicaid funding for their care in a nursing home. Texas remains at the bottom of Medicaid rates across the country, and increases in provider rates for Medicaid have not kept pace with the cost of care and inflation.

Daily Oral Care for Residents in Skilled Nursing Facilities

The neglect of daily oral hygiene leads to costly deterioration of the physical and mental health of residents of skilled nursing facilities. Legislation should be passed requiring a provision of daily oral health care for residents of skilled nursing facilities and enforced by HHSC.