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Home Care Service Providers Call for Immediate Funding to Prevent Service Gaps

Older Adults Remain At Risk Despite Proposed Boosts for FY26

Boston, MA — Mass Aging Access (MAA), the statewide membership organization supporting older adults and the 27 Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) across the Commonwealth, applauds the Governor for her recognition of the growing needs of our rapidly increasing older adult population in the Administration's FY26 House 1 budget proposal released this week.

With recognition of these positive steps forward, MAA continues to call for immediate funding to plug ongoing gaps in critical senior home care programs. After months of urging state officials to take action, the state home care network still awaits supplemental funding for FY25, where providers are anticipating multi-million dollar shortfalls. Without additional funding, essential, daily services for older adults are at risk, including home-delivered meals, homemaking, personal care, and behavioral health supports.

While the Governor's FY26 budget proposal includes an additional \$104.4 million to address projected growth over FY25 funding levels, it is premised on Aging Service Access Points (ASAPs), the agencies that provide in-home services, implementing managed intake. This process will delay services for some older adults and will put caps on the number of individuals with nursing home-eligible health conditions who are able to stay at home through the state funded Enhanced Community Options Program. Mass Aging Access continues to review the details of the FY26 budget and will have more details to come shortly.

"This is not the time to be stepping back from programs that support our most vulnerable older adults. Quarter after quarter, we know that there are more aging adults in need of the critical services provided by ASAPs," said Betsey Crimmins, Executive Director of Mass Aging Access. "We are grateful to see increases for FY26 and know this will positively impact our consumers and their families - but we also know that some of our ASAP providers are close to running out of funding very soon. Older adults in need of care cannot wait. With the federal fiscal outlook only anticipated to worsen, we are urging our state partners to act to support our communities and organizations."

Home care services in the ASAP network are funded through two state line-items. MAA has been advocating to inform state leaders of significant budget shortfalls in these items, as well as the state's elder nutrition line-item, since mid-2024. However, neither of the two supplemental funding opportunities released in January 2025 offered necessary support for these programs. Existing FY25 deficits are projected to total \$54,729,868:

Line Item 9110-1630 (Elder Home Care Purchased Services); Expected FY25 deficit:

- o Based on current utilization trends of 8% growth: anticipated deficit of \$46,107,642

Line Item 9110-1633 (Elder Home Care Case Management); Expected FY25 deficit:

- o Based on current utilization trends of 8% growth: anticipated deficit of \$8,622,226

Our network is working closely with the Executive Office of Aging and Independence to review and ensure program integrity measures, but this will stem only a small portion of the increasing costs of these programs in this fiscal year.

The wide array of services provided by ASAPs like Meals on Wheels, in-home services and supports, and case management are intended to prevent older adults from needing more expensive nursing home care or hospital visits. Home care saves the state money for each person kept at home and in their communities - where most want to age. Without sufficient funding for home care services, waitlists will emerge across the state, forcing many people to turn to nursing homes and more expensive care, creating ballooning costs down the road for the state.

"Data consistently shows that home care gives the best outcomes for older adults at the lowest cost. We know that these services will save the state money in the long run while giving seniors the care that they need now," said Roseann Martoccia, Board President of Mass Aging Access and Executive Director of WestMass ElderCare. "Funding is imminently expected to run dry for ASAPs. We are urging immediate action by the Healey Administration and the Legislature to include supplemental funding for home care line-items and bolster their allocations for FY26."

Mass Aging Access calls for urgent and immediate allocation of supplemental funds for FY25 and full funding in FY26 to prevent budget shortfalls from cutting off services to older adults in need.

About Mass Aging Access

Mass Aging Access (MAA), formerly known as Mass Home Care, is a statewide advocacy organization representing the 27 Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and the individuals and families they serve. The ASAPs provide critical services to older adults across the Commonwealth, ensuring they can live independently and with dignity in their communities. For more information, or to see a list of member organizations, please visit <https://agingaccess.org>.