



## **STATE OF WASHINGTON WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL ON AGING 2016 State Legislative Priorities**

*The aging demographic is rapidly growing and modest investment today can preserve programs that have immense value. For those receiving care, the family members providing services to those in need, and for Washington's economy, our system of focusing on caring for older adults in their home makes this State a model of how to best treat older adults while conserving precious state resources.*

*Nothing will better serve the needs of our rapidly growing Senior population than investing in the fundamental services provided to those most in need –and we need to plan for the future of our state – a future where older people live more productive lives with a modest amount of help.*

- Support implementation of the State Alzheimer's Plan
  - Encourage passage of a resolution in the Legislature in support of the plan
  
- Protect Vulnerable Adults
  - Support passage of legislation increasing penalties for financial exploitation of older citizens
  - Advocate for improvements in the State's guardianship programs
    - Advocate for added funding for the Office of Public Guardianship
    - Support broadening the decision-making services offered by the Office of Public Guardianship to allow the Office to provide a more comprehensive range of assistance, such as agents for power of attorney, representative payees, and trustees, in addition to guardianship
  
- Expand funding for the Senior Citizen's Services Act
  
- Expand Family Caregiver Support for unpaid caregivers to help meet the growing population of those eligible for this program which delays or diverts people from entering more expensive Medicaid long-term services
  
- Support reinstatement of Medicaid coverage for adult hearing and vision hardware/services.
  
- Support the continuation and expansion of the Health Homes Initiative
  
- Support activities of the Joint Legislative Executive Committee on Aging and Disability Issues and it's continuation for another biennium or as a standing committee of the Legislature



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The Older Americans Act (OAA) needs to be reauthorized and funded adequately. OAA programs sustained a loss in funding due to the FFY 2013 sequester cuts, resulting in the State losing two million in funding. This cut, on top of over-a-decade of flat funding for OAA, has resulted in this vital program not keeping pace with inflation or population growth.

- Support the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act in the House of Representatives
- Increase funding for the Older Americans Act

Currently, Medicare only pays for post-hospital skilled nursing facility care when patients are formally classified as “*inpatients*” for three days. Medicare will not pay for such care when the increasingly common outpatient “*observation status*” classification is used, even when a patient remains under observation for three or more days. The “Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2015” would count all time beneficiaries spend in the hospital toward the three-day inpatient requirement necessary to receive Medicare coverage for post-hospital care.

- Support the “Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2015”, HR1571/S843