

Pennsylvania Receives \$34 Million to Provide Essential Services to Older Adults

Harrisburg, PA -- As part of the federal government's response to the COVID-19 emergency, Pennsylvania has received \$34 million to support services authorized by the Older Americans Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. These services include home-delivered meals; in-home care services; respite care and other support to families and caregivers; and information and referral services.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. As a result, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a total of \$955 million for states in grants from the Administration for Community Living (ACL). These funds help to meet the increasing needs of older adults and people with disabilities, during this pandemic, so that they can remain safe, independent and healthy.

"This new funding will help the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) support older adults," said Pennsylvania Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. "These funds will go directly toward helping provide support services on the front lines of this crisis such as delivering meals, advocating for older adults in residential facilities and providing other essential services, such as protective services."

"Since this crisis began in Pennsylvania, we've seen the need for services like meal delivery increase as senior centers and adult day centers had to close temporarily. This increase in demand and change in service delivery have increased costs to the AAAs and their service providers," said Sec. Torres. "This support from HHS is most welcome and needed."

CARES Act funding for Pennsylvania's seniors includes:

- \$8.5 million for Home and Community Based Services, which help older adults remain at home and minimize their exposure to COVID-19. These services include personal care assistance; care management, help with household chores; grocery shopping; and transportation to essential services such as a medical appointment.
- \$20.4 million for home-delivered meals for older adults. With this funding, states can also expand alternate delivery methods such as "drive-through" or "grab-and-go" meals for older adults who typically would participate in meal programs at community centers and other locations that are now closed.
- \$4.3 million for the Family Caregiver Support Program to expand a range of services that help family and informal caregivers provide support for their loved ones at home. These services include caregiving supplies and services, counseling, respite care, caregiving training, and information referral services.
- \$850,000 to support the State Long-term Care Ombudsman program in providing consumer advocacy services for residents of long-term care facilities across Pennsylvania. Restrictions on visitation have increased the demand for ombudsman services, as families seek assistance in ensuring the well-being of their loved ones. Pennsylvania's Ombudsman Program will seek to expand its virtual presence to residents and their families. This funding can be used to hire additional staff; to purchase technology and associated hardware, and to purchase personal protective equipment once in-person visits resume.

