

[REP. KATE HOGAN'S SENIOR NEWS]



Caring for our Seniors

Dear Friends,

As you know, Councils on Aging (COAs) are the community focal point for social and support services for elders, families, and caregivers. Three hundred and forty nine communities in Massachusetts have established a municipally-based COA. Each COA is eligible to receive what's known as a "formula grant" in the annual state budget, based on the community's 60-and-older population, which currently equates to \$9 per senior, per year.

The formula is set by the count of the April 1, 2010 U.S. Census; however, the 60-and-older population is growing quickly. Since the 2010 U.S. Census was released, the 60+ age cohort in Massachusetts has increased from 19% to 22% of the state's total population. By the next U.S. Census in the year 2020, projections indicate that the 60 and older population will comprise 24% of the Commonwealth's population.

Recognizing the changing demographics of our state, the state legislature aims to accommodate this growing group of seniors by increasing the formula grant rate. In our FY17 budget, the legislature increased the COA formula grant from \$9 to \$10 per senior, per year – a significant step forward in reaching our end goal of \$12 per senior, per year by 2020. While a \$1 increase might seem inconsequential, the extra funds will go far in helping councils better connect seniors to programs, services, and activities.

In June I informed you of some of the other senior programs that were included in the House budget. Since then, the Senate also passed their budget, a conference committee resolved the differences between the two bills, and a final legislative budget has been sent to the Governor for his approval. Programs that received funding in the final FY17 budget include Home Care Services, Supportive Senior Housing, Elder Protective Services, Elder Nutrition (including Meals on Wheels), and the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Each of these programs received increased funding over FY16 levels.

In addition, the FY17 budget included an outside section that will study the feasibility of allowing spouses to be financially reimbursed as official caregivers. This study aims to recognize the sacrifices many individuals in Massachusetts make to care for their loved ones.

When individuals age they have changing requirements for health care services and delivery systems, housing, transportation, economic well-being, socialization, nutrition, family and community support, and security. As Chair of the Elder Caucus I will remain committed to supporting the unique needs of our remarkable seniors.

Rep. Hogan publishes a quarterly E-Newsletter with information about legislative and budgetary accomplishments and events around the district. If you would like to receive this E-Newsletter, please call (617) 722-2130 or email my Communications Director at Kelsey.Schiller@MAhouse.gov

Rep. Hogan's Office Hours

- Office Hours will be by appointment only for August. If you would like to meet, or have any issues or concerns, please contact my office at (617) 722-2130 to schedule an appointment or need our assistance.

Proudly represents Bolton, Hudson, Maynard, and Stow

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