

Budget Hearings

Thank you for taking the time to give us a chance to talk with you today. ***I am Ron Boyd, with the Local Office on Aging in Roanoke*** and I speak today on behalf of my colleague AAA directors and the over 1.4 million older Virginians and their families. The Area Agencies on Aging serve every locality in Virginia helping older Virginians stay in their homes as they age. The costs of AAAs services are supported by a combination of federal, state, local, and private dollars. Not only do we, the AAAs, provide services for older Virginians in each and every community, but we speak for community-based services that enable our shared constituents to live in the communities they helped to build in earlier years. And where they choose to remain living today.

While Virginia's total population is expected to grow by 22% by 2050 (1.9 million) our senior population (age 60 and over) will double over the same period. Growing from 20% of the state's population in 2020 to 31% in 2050.

Virginia's most at-risk and vulnerable population (those 85 and older) will more than quadruple by 2050 (157,882 in 2020 to 653,049 in 2050).

The growth in the age 65 and over population through 2050, coupled with inflation, will result in a projected tripling in total expenditures for Virginia's Medicaid enrollees and a doubling of expenditures per capita and numbers of enrolled beneficiaries.

The Governor's budget continues the critical funding in the FY24-26 budget that ensures older adults and AAA's don't face the potential of service reduction in future years. During the 2023 legislative session the Area Agency on Aging network requested and was allocated \$700,000 to help prevent negative impacts based on the federally required reallocation of funding between AAAs. This \$700,000 funding addresses the reallocation of both federal and state funds that otherwise would have caused uneven disruptions in services across the Commonwealth due to shifts in population growth and shift in numbers of greatest need. This redistribution of funding and initial request for \$700,000 was according to a mandated formula revision that all AAA Directors participated in to ensure the best outcome for older adults statewide.

The AAA's will be seeking support for a budget amendment requesting an additional \$5 million that will support the array of unmet needs of core services across the AAA network. Across the network, the need varies, from Home care, Personal care, transportation, and nutrition – to home-delivered and congregate meals. When surveyed, 16 of the 24 member AAAs were able to respond to the survey. Although incomplete, the data revealed significant unmet need across the Commonwealth and across the core services.

We are requesting \$5,000,000 to be available across the network, distributed equally, for any of the core AAA services so individual AAAs can meet the specific needs of the area served.

Additionally, we support the funding necessary for an Executive Director of the Commonwealth Council on Aging. This is one more important piece of our efforts, along with Secretary Littel and former Senator Mason to "Elevate Aging."

Not only is staying in their homes preferred by older Virginians it the most cost-effective use of resources. Virginia's 25 Area Agencies on Aging are your front line in supporting our older residents who want to remain in their homes or the homes of family members. **An investment in the Area Agencies in Aging Network and programs that "Elevate Aging" is cost savings for the Commonwealth. It is also an investment in the quality of life for older adults and their caregivers living across Virginia.**

You have our trust and confidence as you tackle these issues confronting real Virginians. We give you our support and our offer of assistance as you commence this 2024 Session. Thank you.

