



AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
AGING NETWORK NEWS
Week of September 18, 2015

Countdown to a shutdown? . . . with less than two weeks left in the federal fiscal year, Congress has not yet passed its FY 2016 budget or a stop-gap Continuing Resolution to keep programs and services going as of October 1st. Will there be a shutdown? Pundits say it's possible, but the threat of a shutdown often drives Democrats and Republicans to find common ground. The aging network is naturally concerned about a shutdown, but the network is also concerned about the "sequestration" budget cuts that are still the law of the land - the result of gradually decreasing budget caps. So far, the House and Senate have not shown a desire to cut programs funded by the Older Americans Act, and in fact, maintained its funding levels in the appropriations bills they've been moving. But the Senate dramatically slashed funding for the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs), in Michigan called the Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program. A whopping 42% cut would cripple the program's ability to serve Medicare beneficiaries across the state. The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A) urges advocates to contact members of Congress objecting to the 42% SHIP cut, along with the harmful effects of sequestration or a government shutdown.

Did You Know? The Eldercare Locator is the only national information and referral service for callers seeking help with aging concerns. The Locator was created in 1991 by the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA), and is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A). Callers dialing 1-800-677-1116 Monday through Friday between 9 am and 8 pm ET will reach an information specialist trained to listen, identify relevant resources, and when necessary, provide a "warm transfer," staying on the line at the same time that the caller is connected with another agency. Skilled eldercare counselors handle complex caller requests. Assistance can also be obtained through its website – www.eldercare.gov -- which had almost half a million visitors in 2014.

Last year, the Locator fielded over 270,000 requests for assistance from all 50 states and most U.S. territories, an average of over 1,000 a day. N4A has recently issued a report summarizing the data collected from these calls. Here are some highlights:

- Most callers are women (74%).
- Most callers are seniors looking for services for themselves (72%); 22% are family members looking on behalf of relatives.
- Transportation challenges were the number one reason for calling the Locator (19%), with two-thirds expressing an immediate need and getting to medical appointments the top reason (78%).
- Coming in second at 18% was the need for home and community-based services, including chores like house cleaning and cooking (39%), personal care (35%), case management (12%) and home health care (12%).
- Help with housing was #3, medical services and equipment #4 and health insurance #5.

For a copy of the 2014 Eldercare Locator Data Report: A Snapshot of Older Adult Issues and Needs in America, visit www.n4a.org and look for N4A Publications.