



OLDER MICHIGANIANS DAY

**MAY 12, 2021**

# PLATFORM FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION



## REBALANCE COMMUNITY-BASED LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS (LTSS) FUNDING

Michigan continues to rank below many other states in terms of the large proportion of taxpayer dollars we spend on institutional care in nursing homes compared to the smaller share of resources that go to provide long term care for older adults in home and community-based settings (HCBS). In fiscal year 2016, 57% of Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS) care delivered in the U.S. was through HCBS. In Michigan, only 40% went to HCBS that year, while 60% went to care in institutional settings. Michigan can strengthen the HCBS model of service delivery for individuals receiving Medicaid LTSS by building upon the successes of Michigan's Medicaid HCBS program, known as MI Choice. Furthermore, MI Choice has demonstrated that care delivered in the home is more than 55% less expensive than having the same person moved into a nursing facility or institutional setting.

**ACTION:** Appropriate funds to rebalance Medicaid LTSS funding in Michigan to achieve a goal of at least 50% going to HCBS.



## INCREASE ACCESS TO HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

In Michigan, 6,104 seniors are on waiting lists for essential non-Medicaid in-home services. Research shows older adults who receive in-home services are five times less likely to have been in a nursing home than those who remained on a wait list. Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) funded in-home services include home delivered meals, personal care, homemaking and respite care that delay or prevent the need for more costly long-term care interventions.

**ACTION:** Support the Silver Key Coalition's request for a \$6.375 million increase for AASA in-home services and a \$1 million increase for home delivered meals in AASA's FY 2022 budget.

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## BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH

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## BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FOR OLDER ADULTS

Broadband access can reduce isolation, improve health outcomes and help lower health care costs. Stark disparities currently exist regarding access, with rural and low-income Michiganders impacted negatively. Part of the digital divide for the 60 and older population stems from a lack of broadband infrastructure where they live, and part is due to a lack of know-how when it comes to using the Internet, computers, and smart devices. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified the negative effects, as older adults without Internet access faced added difficulties signing up for vaccines, participating in contact tracing, and had fewer outlets to combat isolation during quarantine.

**ACTION:** Ensure the infrastructure is in place. We urge policymakers to expand access to affordable, reliable high-speed Internet for all Michigan residents, regardless of where they live in the state.

**ACTION:** Digital education for older adults. We urge policymakers to provide funding for educational programs targeted at older adults making use of collaborative models that provide training and pre-loaded technology for program participants.



## SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE CAREGIVER WORKFORCE

Direct care workers (DCW) provide essential care that enables people to continue living in their own homes and communities. The population of individuals over age 75 is expected to grow by over 500,000 in the next 20 years. It is currently estimated that Michigan has a shortage of 34,000 DCW. AARP reports that nearly 90% of those over age 65 want to stay in their own homes, but to do so that may need help. Many DCW workers report they are not adequately compensated or trained for the work they perform. Thirty-five percent (35%) of Michigan DCW report receiving food stamps, 34% report they lack affordable housing, and 22% live below the poverty line.

**ACTION:** Support the Governor's request to make the \$2 per hour wage increase for DCW permanent in FY 2022.

**ACTION:** Support policies that provide quality training, increased career opportunities, and higher quality of life for caregivers.



## ESTABLISHMENT OF A KINSHIP CARE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

Kinship Care is the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of a child by relatives or other adults who have a family relationship to a minor child. Grandparents often serve this role. In Michigan, approximately 52,000 children live in kinship families and the need continues to rise. Research suggests that kinship care offers greater stability for children who are living with their relatives. Support is needed to assist kinship caregivers in addressing barriers to accessing crucial resources.

**ACTION:** Ask the Legislature to revisit the establishment of a Kinship Care Navigator Program at the state level to assist kinship caregivers in obtaining resources and training to help the kinship family thrive while the child(ren) successfully grow into adulthood in a family environment.

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# BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH

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Presented by Area Agencies on Aging and Aging Network Partners