

# The Senior Advocate Alert

 Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

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**The Senior Advocate Alert** is published every other Friday and is distributed via e-mail. Printed copies are available at meetings of local Aging Task Forces and Aging Commissions. If you wish to be placed on the e-mail list, or if you wish to be removed from the list, please contact [mhowell@ssseva.org](mailto:mhowell@ssseva.org).

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## “The Community Calls”

**February 4, 2010**

The Advocacy Committee of Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia met with every one of South Hampton Roads' seven state senators and 16 delegates last fall to educate them on Senior Services' legislative priorities revisited them on Jan. 27. To a person, each legislator said we should brace for a very difficult General Assembly session with the potential for deep cuts. Even so, they said they understood the issues that are important to Senior Services and our customers. **Now it's your turn:**

## “The Community Calls”

**Call and leave a message for your delegate, your senator and the governor – Use**



General Assembly  
Phone Numbers 2010

**this list for the numbers. The governor's office is: (804) 786-4273**

**Call your legislator and ask them to:**

- Restore the proposed 5 percent rate cut and ensure that as the budget shortfall is “fixed” so larger cuts do not occur.
- Restore the core service monies (4.7 percent) that were cut from VDA budget.
- Fund the 200 ID waiver slots which were cut from this year's budget.
- Ensure that slots are not “frozen” in the future – if a slot is available it needs to be filled.
- Protect the quality of the services provided, protect the jobs of the caregivers who may well have to leave their workplace and protect the jobs of the staff who provide them – cuts in rates, service monies and slots will cost jobs!

Remember on February 4<sup>th</sup> The Community Calls!

## Budget Amendment Introduced for Flexible Transportation

Del. Johnny Joannou of Portsmouth has demonstrated his commitment by introducing a budget amendment (275 h) aimed at improving mobility for seniors and people with disabilities. His proposal would increase flexibility in using specialized transportation funds allocated to Area Agencies on Aging. This also would help achieve economies of scale and reduce overhead costs in such transportation. Details of Del. Joannou's proposal can be found under "Selected Bills of Interest" in this edition of **The Senior Advocate Alert**.

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### ~ 2010 Virginia General Assembly ~

#### LEGISLATIVE UPDATES:

- See next page for selected bills.

#### KEY DATES:

- Thursday, Feb. 4: The Community Calls - citizens' telephone call-in day to ask state legislators not to cut Medicaid. For details, please e-mail John Skirven at [skirven@ssseva.org](mailto:skirven@ssseva.org).
- Tuesday, Feb. 16: Crossover day for legislation.
- Thursday, Feb. 25: Crossover day for budget bills.
- Thursday, March 11: Budget bills conference report available by noon.
- Saturday, March 13: End of 2010 session.

#### KEY WEB SITES: *Contact legislators and track legislation.*

- <http://www.ssseva.org/advocacy/representatives.shtml>
- [http://www.vaaaa.org/legislative\\_updates/](http://www.vaaaa.org/legislative_updates/)

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### ~ FEDERAL LEGISLATION ~

#### KEY DATES:

- **Older Americans Act reauthorization:** the federal Administration on Aging has begun soliciting public input concerning congressional reauthorization in 2011. There will be an AoA-convened Listening Forum on Thursday, Feb. 25, at The Westin Alexandria, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria, VA. For details, please e-mail John Skirven at [skirven@ssseva.org](mailto:skirven@ssseva.org).

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**COMMUNICATIONS TIP**

AARP advises you should HAND WRITE your comments to the legislators and send them return receipt requested or hand-deliver them to the legislators.

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**VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
~ SELECTED BILLS OF INTEREST ~**

**Current Year Budget Amendments to House Bill 29 & Senate Bill 29:**

<b><u>Patron/ Item #</u></b>	<b><u>Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Title / Program / Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>House FYI 09-10</u></b>	<b><u>Senate FYI 0910</u></b>
<b><u>Hanger 284 Is</u></b>	<b><u>VDA</u></b>	<b><u>Care Coordination for the Elderly</u></b>		

**Language:** The Virginia Department for the Aging, in collaboration with the 18 Area Agencies on Aging that are authorized to use funding for the Care Coordination for Elderly Program, shall examine and analyze existing state and national care coordination models to determine best practice models. Any Area Agency on Aging (AAA) that receives funding for care coordination may submit a plan describing the model of care coordination to be implemented and shall work with the department to ensure that the plan embraces best practices, integrates its other service-delivery systems and includes sufficient measures for evaluation. The department and designated AAAs shall determine which models of service delivery are appropriate and demonstrate beneficial use of these funds and develop the accompanying service standards.

**Explanation:** This language amendment requires the department to work with 18 Area Agencies on Aging that receive funding for care coordination to determine the best models to use in the Commonwealth for care coordination. This allows AAAs to submit a plan describing the model of care coordination to be used and requires them to work with the department to ensure that the plan embraces best practices, works with other service delivery systems and includes evaluation measures. The department and designated AAAs are required to determine which models of service delivery are appropriate and demonstrate beneficial use of these funds.

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**Next Biennium FY 11 and FY 12 Budget – Amendments to HB30 & SB30:**

Patron/            Agency            Title / Program / Purpose  
Item #

Joannou            VDA            Senior Services of Southeast Virginia Transportation Policy  
275 h

*Language:* The commissioner shall work with Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia to develop a policy which allows the agency to provide transportation to non-Medicaid eligible, low-income disabled individuals who can be accommodated on existing transportation routes provided by the agency to low-income aged individuals to achieve economies of scale and reduce overhead costs.

*Explanation:* This amendment adds language to allow flexibility in the transportation program administered by Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia to achieve economies of scale, reduce overhead costs and better serve those in need of transportation services.

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Patron/            Agency            Title / Program / Purpose  
Item #

Cox            DMAS            Lift Moratorium on Waiver Slots in CY 2011  
297 3h  
Phillips  
297 4h

*Explanation:* This amendment restores funding of \$3.7 million the first year and \$13.3 million the second year from the general fund and a like amount of federal matching Medicaid funds each year to lift the moratorium on new enrollments in the home and community-based waiver programs contained in the introduced budget for calendar year 2011. The moratorium would result in no new distribution of waiver slots for elderly and disabled individuals, individuals with intellectual disabilities, individuals with developmental disabilities and individuals with Alzheimer's disease, when a current waiver recipient leaves the program.

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Patron/            Agency            Title / Program / Purpose  
Item #

O'Bannon            DMAS            Partially Restore Funds for Respite Care Services  
297 5h

*Explanation:* This amendment provides \$2.6 million from the general fund and \$3.3 million from nongeneral funds from federal Medicaid matching funds the first year and \$10.6 million from the general fund and \$10.6 million from nongeneral funds the second year to partially restore funding for respite care services for home and community-based waiver recipients beginning Jan. 1, 2011 that was reduced in the introduced budget. The introduced budget would have reduced available hours of respite care from 720 to 240 hours per year. This amendment provides funding to increase the available hours of respite care from 240 to 480 hours per year. A companion amendment reduces spending in Item 132 to provide funding for this amendment.

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<u>Patron/ Item #</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Title / Program / Purpose</u>
Phillips <u>297 6h</u> Puckett <u>297 1s</u> Whipple <u>297 2s</u>	DMAS	Restore Funds for Respite Care

**Explanation:** This amendment provides \$5.2 million to the general fund and \$6.6 million in federal Medicaid matching funds the first year and \$21.2 million to the general fund and \$21.2 million in federal Medicaid matching funds the second year to restore funding for respite care services for home and community-based waiver recipients beginning Jan. 1, 2011. The introduced budget reduced available hours of respite care from 720 to 240 hours per year. This funding would restore available hours to 720 per year.

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<u>Patron/ Item #</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Title / Program / Purpose</u>
Phillips <u>297 7h</u> BaCote <u>297 8h</u> Puckett <u>297 8h</u> Miller, Y. <u>297 6s</u>	DMAS	Restore Funds for Home & Community-based Provider Rate

**Explanation:** This amendment provides \$18.2 million from the general fund and \$22.9 million in federal Medicaid matching funds the first year and \$18.0 million from the general fund and \$18.0 million from federal Medicaid matching funds the second year to reverse a proposed reduction of 5 percent in the rates paid to providers of home and community-based Medicaid waiver services that was included in the introduced budget.

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<u>Patron/ Item #</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Title / Program / Purpose</u>
Howell <u>297 4s</u>	DMAS	Remove Home and Community-Based Waiver Freeze

**Explanation:** This amendment restores \$3.7 million GF and \$3.7 million NGF the first year and \$13.3 million GF and \$13.3 million NGF from federal Medicaid matching funds the second year to remove a proposal in the introduced budget to freeze the distribution of unallocated home and community-based waiver slots from Jan. 1, 2011 through Dec. 31, 2011.

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<u>Patron/ Item #</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Title / Program / Purpose</u>
Phillips 297 18h	DMAS	Reduce Eligibility Income Limits from 275% of SSI to Unfreeze Waiver Slots

**Language:** Insert - to a percentage of the SSI payment level which would provide general fund savings in the amount of \$3,745,802 the first year and \$13,310,010 the second year.

**Explanation:** This amendment reduces \$3.1 million from the general fund and \$3.1 million in federal Medicaid matching funds the first year and \$13.3 million from the general fund and \$13.3 million in federal Medicaid matching funds the second year by further lowering the eligibility income limit for a Medicaid eligibility group that would be applying for Medicaid long-term services under an optional eligibility category. Language is added to direct the Department of Medical Assistance Services to reduce the eligibility to a level which would generate these savings. A companion amendment in Item 297 provides this funding to reverse a proposal to freeze enrollment in all Medicaid home and community-based waivers, which was included in the introduced budget.

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<u>Patron/ Item #</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Title / Program / Purpose</u>
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BaCote 297 20h	DMAS	
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**Language:** Insert - to a percentage of the SSI payment level which would provide general fund savings in the amount of \$18,154,159 the first year and \$17,961,285 the second year.

**Explanation:** This amendment reduces \$18.2 million from the general fund and \$22.9 million in federal Medicaid matching funds the first year and \$18.0 million from the general fund and \$18.0 million in federal Medicaid matching funds the second year by further lowering the eligibility income limit for a Medicaid eligibility group that would be applying for Medicaid long-term home and community-based services. Language is added to direct the Department of Medical Assistance Services to reduce the eligibility to a level which would generate these savings. A companion amendment in Item 297 provides this funding to reverse a proposed reduction of 5 percent in the rates paid to providers of home and community-based Medicaid waiver services that was included in the introduced budget.

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<u>Patron/ Item #</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Title / Program / Purpose</u>
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Puckett 297 18s	DMAS	Restore Funds for Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction Waiver
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**Explanation:** This amendment restores funding for the elderly or disabled with Consumer Direction home and community-based waiver program that was reduced in the introduced budget by imposing a freeze on the distribution of new slots from Jan. 1, 2011 through Dec. 31, 2011.

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Patron/  
Item #

Agency

Title / Program / Purpose

Phillips  
297 19h  
Puckett  
297 10s

DMAS

Restore Inflation Adjustment for Home Health Agencies

**Explanation: This amendment provides \$182,916 from the general fund and \$230,826 in nongeneral funds the first year and \$402,131 from the general fund and \$402,131 in nongeneral funds from federal Medicaid matching funds the second year to reverse a proposed elimination of an inflationary increase in Medicaid rates for home health agency services that was included in the introduced budget.**

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