



**NEW YORK STATE COALITION FOR THE AGING, INC.
2011 NYS Budget Statement**

**Advocacy Works: State Budget Restores Many
Cuts Even in Worst Budget Year Ever**

1. Title XX

Both the Senate and Assembly voted to restore funding, so that Title XX funds were not diverted. These funds are used in New York City to support senior centers as well as other counties to provide senior programs. NYS Coalition for the Aging and the Council of Senior Center and Services of New York City waged a vigorous fight to restore funds and won bipartisan support.

2. Competitive grant consolidation:

Both the Senate and Assembly voted to reject the Governor's elimination of funding for the programs and replace it by a local competitive grant process. The approved budget restored the program funding at 50% of last year's level.

- Community Empowerment Initiative (\$122,500)
- Congregate Services Initiative (\$403,000)
- Elderly Abuse Education and Outreach Program (\$245,000)
- Enriched Social Adult Day Centers Program (\$122,500)
- Foster Grandparent Program (\$98,000)
- Patients' Rights Hotline and Advocacy (\$31,500)
- Regional Caregivers Centers for Excellence (\$115,000)
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (\$216,500)

3. EISEP, SNAP and CSE funding:

- Budget left EISEP, SNAP and CSE funding at the same amount that was in the Governor's budget in 2010 -11.

EISEP: \$46,035,000 SNAP: \$21,380,000 CSE: \$15,312,000

4. NY Connects Restored at \$3,800,000:

- This is considered a major achievement given that neither house passed its budget with any specific money earmarked to the State Office for the Aging to continue the program which has faced serious funding uncertainty even in the current budget year. The New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging mounted a continuing campaign to have local offices for the aging directly speak with their legislators about the program. The volume of call was heard.

Note: in the past NY Connects funding was part of the Department of Health Budget. Due to these advocacy efforts this funding will now be part of the NYSOFA budget. This is a major improvement for our LTC system.

5. EPIC:

\$22.3 million has been restored to the budget in the EPIC program to continue to provide support for Medicare Part D premiums which average about \$38/month. However, the restored funds only partially restore cuts made by the Governor's budget. Seniors on EPIC will no longer be able to have EPIC pay for drugs not covered by their Medicare Part D plan as has been the case after all appeals fail. Seniors could still try to get a different drug covered by their Medicare Part D plan which would be prescribed for the same condition by their doctor. Or, seniors could switch to a different Medicare drug plan that covered the drug they wanted.

Effective January 1, 2012, EPIC will provide premium assistance for Medicare Part D for those single people with annual incomes less than or equal to \$23,000 and couples with joint annual incomes less than or equal to \$29,000. The program will provide payment for drugs that are covered by an individual's Part D plan or in the excluded drug class when an enrollee has entered into the Medicare Part D coverage gap.

AARP and NY Statewide Senior Action Council and their members advocated successfully to restore this funding.

NYSCA and CSCS's legislative conference on March 2, 2011 was attended by over 80 participants who represented over 75 organizations statewide. On March 3rd we participated in annual legislative visits. These visits provided us with the opportunity to bring our legislative leaders up to date on how the proposed cuts were going to effect the seniors in their districts.

What is clear is that aging advocacy groups like the New York State Coalition for the Aging, NY Statewide Senior Action Council, NYS Association of Area Agencies on Aging, AARP, Council of Senior Centers and Services of NYC, VISION, United Jewish Federation and several others **who worked together with almost weekly conference calls since January worked effectively to make the case with legislators to restore funds.** When legislators learned the impact of the Governor's cuts they moved to help. **Without the advocacy, these cuts would have gone through.** So, thanks to all our readers who made calls to your legislators.

We all made the difference!!

NYSCA is still gathering information on the budget and the SAGE Commission proposal. We will update you regularly.

For further information, please contact Joanne Macklin (518) 765-2790 or Joanne@coalitionforaging.org

**~Aging in Place is Affordable~
Support Community Based Services**