



## **An Advocates Guide to the Governor's Balanced Budget**

### **1. What is the Governor's Balanced Budget (GBB)?**

Under Oregon law, the Governor releases his recommended budget at the beginning of December prior to the regular legislative session (December of the even numbered year in preparation for the session starting in January). Oregon requires a balanced budget – expenditures must be balanced by revenue. The Governor's Balanced Budget is a recommended budget – the Oregon Legislature then takes this budget under advisement and crafts their own budget - commonly referred to as the “Co Chairs Budget” for consideration by the legislative body. You can read the GBB at <http://www.oregon.gov/gov/priorities/pages/budget.aspx>.

### **2. What were the recommendations for services and supports to seniors and people with disabilities?**

The GBB provided many investments in services and supports for seniors and people with disabilities. In total, the GBB recommends \$29 million in strategic investments in Oregon's nationally recognized system of long-term care. The GBB also identifies approximately \$70 million in additional revenue from programs, provider taxes, rates and other sources of revenue.

### **3. What are the strategic investments?**

Strategic investments include:

- \$7.3m General Fund (GF) to improve mental health, traumatic brain injury and dementia related services for seniors
- \$1.8m GF in options counseling services
- \$675,000 GF investment (\$2.0m TF) to improve nursing facility care by increasing staffing ratios
- \$2.5m GF (\$5m TF) to increase necessary access and quality of eligibility, case management and adult protective services by implementing a workload model.
- \$9.1m GF (\$29.2TF) investment in rate increase for in home and community based providers

### **4. What are areas of concern with the GBB?**

There are some areas of concern in the proposed budget. They include:

- While there is \$70m in savings identified in the senior and persons with disabilities budget, not all of those savings remain within the service area of seniors and people with disabilities. Almost half of these savings are diverted to other areas of the state budget.
- With no additional funding proposed, inflationary pressures will mean budget reductions for Oregon Project Independence. OPI has waiting lists around the state and has not yet been able to fulfill the mandate to add services to people with disabilities

- Flat funding of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
- No reinstatement of in-home care hours or other significant cuts that have been taken by seniors and people with disabilities in recent budgets.
- A need for specificity as to where the funds that were invested by the budget will be invested in the named programs. It is important that the priority remain services to seniors and people with disabilities.

### **5. What happens next with these recommendations?**

The Ways & Means Committee of the Legislature will now use the GBB as a framework for consideration of this budget. There will be significant discussion around the areas identified in the GBB. Ultimately, the Co Chairs of Ways & Means will release their own version of a budget for the 2013-15 budget biennium for vote by the legislative body.

### **6. What is the status of Oregon Project Independence**

OPI is flat funded in the GBB. There is no suggested increase in the program. Therefore, there would be no ability, under this budget scenario, to add people with disabilities or to significantly increase the numbers of seniors served by this effective, efficient program. OPI has continued to help individuals at risk of premature or unnecessary facility based care to remain in their own home and off of entitlement programs for a minimal investment per month. OPI demonstrates that a small amount of assistance can net better care, lower costs and still maintain personal responsibility, independence and dignity of the individual. OPI should be restored to \$12.6 million in funding for the 13-15 biennium.

### **7. Is the ‘carve-out’ for long-term care under Health System Transformation discussed in the GBB?**

The GBB does not discuss the current carve-out for long-term services and supports, which are protected under previous legislation from integration into a managed care model. However, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have recently required Oregon to complete a study that would provide a proposal for the integration of long-term care into the CCO model rather than the current coordination that is occurring. Stakeholders and advocates will want to be engaged and monitor this process carefully during 2013.

### **8. How can I help educate legislators as to the importance of investing in services and supports for seniors and people with disabilities?**

Your voice matters! Join our advocacy network to receive the latest information on what’s happening at the capitol and with the budget. Let your local Area Agency on Aging and/or Advisory Council know you want to advocate. We can help you get involved with your legislators!

Email O4AD – [info@o4ad.org](mailto:info@o4ad.org) or call us: 503-463-8692 to get involved. Your voice is critical as we work to protect and increase investments in services to seniors and people with disabilities. Our advocates are a critical voice for Oregon’s seniors and people with disabilities.

*For more information, please contact Nicole Palmateer, O4AD, at [nicole@o4ad.org](mailto:nicole@o4ad.org) or 503-463-8692.*