



Protecting the Independence, Dignity, Choice and Safety of Oregon's Seniors & People with Disabilities

Oregon's Legislature has the opportunity to continue to prioritize and protect the independence, dignity, choice and safety of Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities for the 2015-17 biennium. Continuing the critical investments from 2013-15 will maximize the overall goals of better care, better quality of life and overall lower costs for our state's system of long-term services and support. These key investments include:

- **Prioritization of budget decisions:** Advocate for a biennial budget that supports continuation of key investments made in services and supports for Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities during the 13-15 biennium. The investments are positively impacting necessary services and supports to Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities. Key investments that must be continued for 2015-17 include:

- **Oregon Project Independence** – services for seniors. **\$21.4 million.** A critical investment has been made to expand the efficient, effective and needed services through OPI to seniors.

- **Support to the ADRC network via key program investments**

The Aging and Disability Resource Connection concept was adopted as a key strategy in the ACA (Affordable Care Act), signifying the importance of information and assistance, referral and support to social services and supports to creating a better health care and long-term services and supports system. Oregon needs to refocus attention on intervention and prevention in order to realize a strong diversion strategy for unnecessary entrance to entitlement programs through continuing 13-15 investments. **These critical investments are:**

- **Evidence Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. \$1.25 million.** Proven, successful programs that promote health and prevent disease for older adults.
 - **Options Counseling. \$1.4 million.** Increasing access to person-centered, self directed Options Counseling services through the ADRC network.
 - **Evidence Based Mental Health programs for seniors and people with disabilities. \$1.8 million.** Expanding successful, proven strategies to address depression, anxiety and substance abuse among seniors and people with disabilities. These programs do not duplicate what a county mental health program may already provide.
 - **Gatekeeper Program. \$1.7 million.** Providing training for organizations that come into contact with older adults as a part of their regular business to identify signs of abuse or neglect.
- **Oregon Project Independence Pilot Project for People with Disabilities. \$6 million.** This pilot project is the beginning of offering the cost effective, efficient and necessary preventative services of the OPI program for persons with physical disabilities.
 - **Workload based staffing.** Continuing workload based staffing for State and Area Agencies working with the Medicaid program.
 - **Equity for Area Agencies. 95% as called for by statute.** Equity funding to support Area Agencies administering Medicaid long-term services and support.

- **Support for Older Americans Act programs. \$2 million.** Support to mitigate the negative impacts of Sequestration to Older Americans Act programs throughout the state.

- **Continuation of other investments in programs for seniors and people with disabilities:** Several important investments have been made in this biennium to support services and support for seniors and people with disabilities. This includes investments in mental health programs, caregiver training, Special Needs transportation, Alzheimer's resources, and Public Guardian and Conservator programs. Continuing the investment in these programs is an important step to rebuilding the foundation of Oregon's system of long-term services and supports.

- **Directing savings from revisions to the Senior Medical Expense Deduction to maximize Oregon's commitment to the independence dignity, choice and safety of seniors and people with disabilities:** During the 2013-15 biennium, changes were made to the Senior Medical Expense Deduction program which bring significant savings for the State General Fund. With a reduction in this program for seniors, it is important that a significant amount of realized savings will continue to be invested in services and supports for seniors.

Prioritizing the independence, dignity, choice and safety for Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities is a good investment for everyone.