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Statement from Larke Recchie, Executive Director
Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging are pleased that Governor Kasich's [budget plan](#) continues to shift the balance in long-term care funding away from more costly nursing homes and toward cost-effective home and community care.

The budget recognizes Area Agencies on Aging's success in reducing the number of older adults admitted to costly nursing homes and reining in Medicaid costs. As we have long advocated, it sets forth a plan for a unified long-term care budget in which spending on services and care settings will be driven by the actual needs and choices of seniors and people with disabilities, rather than by separate budget line items.

However, the budget does propose changes and cuts to the long-term care system that could jeopardize our ability to provide the same services that have benefitted older adults and saved taxpayers money. This concerns us because the budget anticipates growth in Medicaid programs such as PASSPORT and Assisted Living, but proposes changes in the funding needed to serve that growth.

Area Agencies on Aging provide valuable services to the people of Ohio that go beyond the well-known Medicaid programs. In fact, we have 30 years' experience as a statewide network counseling older adults about their options and connecting them to community services that help them take responsibility for their own long-term care needs and delay costly Medicaid services. These and other services help older adults stay in their homes longer at no cost to Ohio. Our pivotal role as a community resource center in Ohio's local communities is critical for connecting people to local resources.

Today is the start of the budget process, and Area Agencies on Aging look forward to helping policy makers understand that our statewide aging network is vitally important to older Ohioans. Their decisions must avoid the unintended consequences of denying access to care and driving more seniors into costly Medicaid programs.

For more information visit the Office of Health Transformation website,
www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov/.

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About the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging | o4a

The Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a), a nonprofit organization, is a statewide network of agencies that provide services for older adults, their families and caregivers, as well as advocate on their behalf. The Association addresses issues that have an impact on the aging network, provides services to members, and serves as a collective voice for Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). Equal Opportunity Employer/Provider. For more information visit, www.ohioaging.org.