



**Written Testimony Submitted to
The Ohio Senate**
Senate Finance Committee
Medicaid Finance Subcommittee

April 30, 2013

Respectively Submitted By:
Ronald Hill
Chief Executive Officer
Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging
925 Euclid Avenue, Suite 600
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Thank you Chairman Dave Burke and members of the Medicaid Finance Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding Amended Substitute House Bill 59, the proposed State Biennium Budget bill for SFY 2014-15. As the Chief Executive Officer of the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA), my testimony will explain the key role of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) as the front door to long term care solutions that links older adults to cost-effective in-home and community-based programs; and, why it is important to adequately fund the PASSPORT long term care program.

The Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA), a private non-profit corporation, is organized and designated by the State of Ohio to be the planning, coordinating and administrative agency for federal and state aging programs in Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina Counties. It is one of twelve Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in the state organized together with local service provider organizations and the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) to form the state's public aging services network. The network has been the backbone of the state's community-based long term services and supports system since the 1970's. The network works together to create opportunities for older Ohioans to receive needed in-home and community-based services and supports and to age successfully in their own homes and communities.

In 2013, the Office of Health Transformation will begin implementing by region its new Integrated Care Delivery System (ICDS) demonstration that will coordinate Medicare and Medicaid services for dually eligible individuals. WRAAA's planning

and service area has been designated by the State as the Northeast region. Dually eligibles will begin voluntary enrollment on September 1, 2013 and the Northeast region will be the first to begin mandatory enrollment on October 1, 2013.

WRAAA, together with the other six area agencies on aging participating in the demonstration, are committed to working with the state and federal agencies and managed care companies to develop a successful new ICDS. Key to its success, however, is an adequately funded front door to long term services and supports that have been an integral part of each AAAs PASSPORT Program. AAAs provide information and assistance; screening; assessment; pre-admission screening and resident review (PASRR); level-of-care determination; long-term consultation; and, care plan development services. This PASSPORT/front door role has been performed by Ohio's AAAs for over 30 years and will provide continuity as the Administration moves to the ICDS model. Statewide, the AAAs receive some 300,000 calls annually from people seeking help for older adults and individuals with disabilities and is considered a trusted community resource. These services and functions are performed outside the ICDS, but are vital for a system to move people needing long term services and supports to the right service, in the right setting, at the right time.

To ensure a strong "front door" to link older adults to long term services and supports, we are requesting that funding be **restored to SFY 2011 levels or \$3.6 million to the PASSPORT "other operating" funds** that include screeners, assessors and provider relations. This translates to a total of \$900,000 per year in state funds, drawing down \$900,000 per year in federal funds. The Amended

Substitute House Bill includes *only half of the funding* amount needed to restore PASSPORT screeners and assessors to a level that meets the demand and the goal to rebalance Ohio's long-term care system. We are appreciative of the House recognizing the essential services that PASSPORT home care provides, but effective rebalancing of Ohio's long-term care system will not happen without adequate resources to achieve this goal.

Also, we are concerned about the provider rates for the PASSPORT home care program. The previous budget cut PASSPORT providers by 3% resulting in fewer quality providers to serve Ohio's elderly population. While rates for adult day care services in PASSPORT and Assisted Living rates were increased in the Governor's budget as introduced, we believe other **provider rates need to be restored to SFY 2011 funding levels or increased by 3%** to ensure that all older adults receive quality services without delay. The Amended Substitute House Bill contained *only half of the funding amount* to restore PASSPORT provider rates to the level needed to ensure enough quality providers are available. Again, we are appreciative of the House recognizing the need for equity in provider rates, but equity will be achieved only at the full restoration of the rates for all providers, which amounts to \$5 million per year in state funds, and will also enable the state to draw down additional federal funds.

In summary, we encourage your continued support to fund cost-effective long term care choices for older Ohioans that contain Medicaid costs and save taxpayers' dollars. We urge you to **restore \$3.6 million for PASSPORT operating costs** to its SFY 2011 levels to support our screeners and assessors who are experts specially

trained to provide information and services. Also, we urge you to **restore \$3 million for PASSPORT providers** to its SFY 2011 levels to ensure that seniors receive quality services without delay. By restoring PASSPORT funding, it will support the Administration's goal to rebalance Medicaid spending by prioritizing in-home and community-based services. The "front door" to long term services and supports and quality providers are vital elements to reach this goal.