

Agenda Item Number 12.A.

S&DS' Legislative Priorities for 2007

End of Session Status Report and Budget Update

Presenter: Kay Metzger

Action Recommended: None. Information Only

Background:

One of Senior & Disabled Services (S&DS) responsibilities as the Area Agency on Aging and Disability Services for Lane County is to serve as an advocate for those we serve. To this end, S&DS, with the help of the members of its Senior Services and Disability Services Advisory Councils, endeavors to inform and educate members of the State Legislature about the needs and concerns of seniors and people with disabilities. To facilitate this work, every even-numbered year S&DS develops a set of priorities for the upcoming legislative session which convenes in January of the odd-numbered year.

The issues for the 2007 legislative session identified by S&DS' Advisory Councils and adopted as agency priorities by the Lane Council of Governments' Board of Directors are set forth below in summary form. Additional information provided for each priority includes: 1) a brief analysis of how it fared in the Governor's Recommended Budget for 2007-09, 2) the identification of 2007 legislative bills which pertain to it, 3) a status report on these bills, and 4) where applicable, the impact of the 2007 Legislature's action on the S&DS 2007-08 budget.

S&DS' PRIORITIES FOR THE 2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

Promote actions to create a culture that supports consumer needs and input within the Department of Human Services, Department of Medical Assistance Programs (DMAP).

How addressed in the Governor's Recommended Budget? This issue was not addressed in the Governor's Recommended budget.

Status at End of Session:

SB 360: Senator Morrisette introduced SB360 establishing the Office of Health Care Ombudsman. It was referred to the Senate Committee on Health Policy and Public Affairs, where it received a public hearing and work session. The Committee referred SB360 to Ways and Means without recommendation in April 2007. No further action was taken on the bill.

SB753B: Provides that all public bodies cooperate with an ombudsman and promptly provide information requested by the ombudsman that is relevant to the duties of the ombudsman. The bill requires any person who contracts with a public body to cooperate to the extent the ombudsman is investigating the contract. This bill passed and was signed into law by the Governor.

Other Activities: Advocacy Committee members of the Senior Services and Disability Services Advisory Councils met with high ranking DMAP officials to present our concerns regarding the lack of consumer/stakeholder participation in rule-making and procedure development. Since then, several Advocacy Committee members have pushed for follow-up and concrete evidence of improvement. Most recently, Advocacy Committee members met with DMAP representatives to specifically discuss the role of the Client Advisory Services Unit in addressing client complaints. While Legislative actions were not as successful as we had hoped, there is slow progress towards cultural change within DMAP through the tireless efforts of individual Advocacy Committee members.

Expand funding for Older Americans Act (OAA)-type programs.

How addressed in the Governor's Recommended Budget? The Oregon Project Independence Program was funded at 16 million dollars, up from 12 million allocated in 2005-07.

Status at End of Session:

HB5031 (DHS Budget): Funded the Oregon Project Independence (OPI) program at **12.6 million dollars**, using funds from the tax-deferral trust fund. Thus, no State General Fund dollars were committed to OPI. The table below describes the changes to the OPI allocation for Lane County, based on the decisions of the Legislature. Last spring the LCOG Board approved the LCOG operating budget for FY2007-08, which included a proposed budget for S&DS. At that time, the most current information available was the Governor's Recommended Budget

(GRB). Therefore, S&DS' proposed budget was built on those figures. This figure is reflected in the "Approved 2007-08" row in the table below.

Lane Council of Governments, Senior & Disabled Services Oregon Project Independence Budget	
Approved 2007-08	\$736,528
Expended 2006-07	\$524,328
Updated Allocation	\$574,480
Difference: Updated vs Expended	\$50,152

Due to the limited OPI allocation, the Department of Human Services has determined the program will not be expanded to people under 60 years of age who are physically disabled. Also, while S&DS' OPI program is currently open to new applicants, last year the demand exceeded capacity and it was necessary to initiate a waiting list. It is very possible a waiting list will be needed again unless funding is increased through Legislative action.

SB 996 (Baby Boomers Planning): Required DHS to provide grants to Area Agencies on Aging for the purpose of comprehensive planning for the aging population. Referred to the Joint Ways and Means Committee with a do pass recommendation. The bill remained in committee upon adjournment.

HB 2951 (Older Oregonians Act): Appropriated General Fund dollars to DHS for senior citizen services and programs. Referred to the Joint Ways and Means Committee without recommendation to passage, where it remained at adjournment.

Protect the core values of Oregon's model of long term care.

How addressed in the Governor's Recommended Budget? This issue was not addressed in the Governor's Recommended Budget.

Status at End of Session:

HB 3330 (People with Disabilities Task Force): Established the People with Disabilities Task Force to study and make recommendations to Legislative Assembly concerning range of services available and needed to meet the needs of children and adults with disabilities. Appropriated monies to DHS for staffing and expenses of the task force. Referred to the Joint Ways and Means Committee with a do pass recommendation, where it remained at adjournment.

Keep the promise implied by the enactment of HB 2288 (2003) B fund Aequity@ for Area Agencies on Aging and Disability Services.

How addressed in the Governor's Recommended Budget? The Governor's Recommended Budget funded the implementation of Oregon Administrative Rule 411-002-0175, thus supporting equitable funding for Transfer Area Agencies on Aging to 95% of what it would cost the State Department of Human Services to run the program .

Status at End of Session:

At the May re-shoot of the budget, DHS updated the cost associated with providing services to reflect a more accurate picture of the full cost.

HB 5031(DHS Budget): At the recommendation of the Joint Ways and Means Committee, Transfer Area Agencies on Aging were funded at 90% of what it costs DHS to provide the services. Using the updated figures provided at the May re-shoot, this results in an increase in funding to Transfer Area Agencies on Aging. The table below describes the impact of this Legislative decision on the S&DS budget.

Lane Council of Governments, Senior & Disabled Services Long-Term Care and Financial Services Program Budget	
Approved 2007-08	\$7,495,349
Expended 2006-07	\$7,305,401
Updated Allocation	\$7,737,747
Difference: Updated vs Expended	\$432,346

With positive growth in anticipated funding of \$432,346, S&DS is currently in the process of adding five new staff positions. These additions will offer improved customer service by reducing the case loads of eligibility staff and case managers. However, S&DS continues to grapple with the "Equity" issue. The updated allocation reflects only 90% of what it costs DHS to run the same program. Thus, Lane County residents are not yet receiving equivalent service to other counties, and our staff carry case loads at least 10% higher than those in DHS offices. This just should not be. Advocacy efforts on this issue continue to be critical.

