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2024 State Legislative Agenda

1. Provide 15.2 million for SFY 2025 to sustain the nutrition programs of the Area Agencies on Aging, which provide food, meals, and related services to seniors and individuals with disabilities.

The Washington State Area Agencies (AAA) on Aging stresses that:

- a) Washington's population of seniors living in poverty has increased since the pandemic began, with a dramatic increase in 2022.
- b) Washington has underinvested in the food safety net for seniors and people with disabilities.
- c) For seniors, access to healthy nutrition, especially programs that pair food with socialization or case management, improve well-being and health outcomes, reduce costly interventions and support more stable housing.

➤ [Investments Needed for Senior Nutrition Services \(1/7/2024\)](#)

2. Fund \$2.58 million GF-S in the 2024 budget to reduce the caseloads to 55:1 for case managers, whose clients do not have caregivers in the home.

In Washington, while Medicaid case managers are finally improving due to 2022-23 budget investments, the long-term care workforce is in crisis. By SFY25, Area Agencies on Aging will be supporting over 4,800 clients who do not have a paid in-home caregiver. Potential adverse impacts include:

- a) Less paid caregivers result in longer waits to receive care.
- b) Clients without caregivers require more case manager time than those with in-home caregivers.

➤ [Fund \\$2.58 million for In-Home Case Managers for \(WA Association of Area Agencies on Aging\) \(12/19/2023\)](#)

3. Enact HB 1859 to ensure that the residents in all types of long-term care facilities have the right to appeal an eviction, have the same rights as residents of nursing homes, are treated appropriately, and are protected by relevant regulations.

With the exception of residents of nursing homes, Washington residents of long-term care homes (veteran's homes, assisted living facilities, enhanced service facilities and adult family homes), **do not have the right to appeal an eviction and have a fair hearing**. Because they cannot appeal an eviction, many such residents are afraid to complain about their rights or how they are treated. Passage of HB 1859 is a step towards fixing this inequality. The bill also requires that state departments adopt rules and policies to further the intent and purpose of the bill with respect to **all** long-term care facilities and operators.

➤ HB 1859 (text) [1859.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#) (website) [Washington State Legislature HB 1859](#)

- [Long-term care residents' rights don't match those of other tenants – Washington State Senior Citizens' Lobby \(waseniorlobby.org\) \(12/27/2023\)](#)
- [Long-Term Care Residents Deserve Equal Rights - AgeWise King County](#)
- [Long-term care residents' rights don't match those of other tenants | The Seattle Times](#)

4. Support and fund legislation that will assist people with dementia, their families, and organizations that serve people with dementia.

- a) Support a request by Rep. Bateman for [Aging and Long-Term Support Administration](#) - DSHS (AL TSA) and the [Dementia Action Collaborative](#) (DAC) to increase the funding for the Specialized Dementia Care Program from \$43.48 per client per day to \$60 per day per client (the governor has proposed \$55). The funding as initially requested would have been \$6,972,000, of which \$3,256,000 was to be paid by the state. The request is expected to affect approximately 1153 clients and 83 facilities.

The rationale for the request:

- i. Encourage more assisted living facilities to participate in the Specialized Dementia Care Program.
- ii. Provide necessary services for Medicaid recipients with dementia who are participating in the program and residing in assisted living facilities.
- iii. The program is intended to delay the need for participants to enter nursing home care.

The expansion of this program would significantly save the state money as it is much cheaper to pay for services in assisted living facilities than services in nursing homes.

- [Specialized Dementia Care Program in Assisted Living Facilities | DSHS \(wa.gov\)](#)
- [Washington Medicaid Specialized Dementia Care Program \(SDCP\) \(medicaidplanningassistance.org\)](#)

- b) Request to legislature by Alzheimer's Association for **\$50,000 for the Dementia Friends Program**, run through the UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center. The program "is a public awareness anti-stigma program that trains individuals on how to give an hour-long educational talk to their community about what dementia is and how to help their neighbors, friends, and family members with dementia." It has been a successful program and now operates in **20** counties. Previously, the program received \$100,000 per year from the legislature. The request is for an additional \$50,000 to cover the remaining 19 counties (bringing the total to \$150k).

- [Dementia Friends in Washington State - Memory and Brain Wellness Center](#)