

PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGING
COUNCIL ON AGING

EST. 1973

Dear Governor Shapiro,

We, the Pennsylvania Council on Aging, deeply appreciate your prioritization of older Pennsylvanians in your budget and legislative priorities. Last year, your administration developed the *Aging Our Way, PA Plan*, established the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) division at the PA Department of Aging, committed to addressing older Pennsylvanians' housing needs through the Housing Action Plan, and elevated the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in your proposed budget.

The *Aging Our Way, PA Plan*, through the contributions of thousands of older PA residents, became a roadmap for addressing the needs of our aging population across urban, suburban, and rural areas. Each of these areas has diverse needs, and the common thread is that it will take a true increase in funding to fulfill the initiatives of this Plan.

We encourage you to continue prioritizing the increasing number of citizens living with ADRD. Your inclusion of the \$1.9M in last year's budget for a new ADRD division in the PA Department of Aging, and your signing of Act 111 to establish the division, demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting those citizens living with ADRD and their caregivers, which we hope expands in future budgets.

We commend your expansion of the Property Tax Rent Rebate program and development of the Housing Action Plan. As you know, our older population struggles with rising cost of living, challenges with home repairs and modifications, and even homelessness. These issues must be addressed in the Housing Action Plan by uplifting the voices of older adults in its development. We hope to see increased funding for the Housing Action Plan and the many existing housing programs that benefit older Pennsylvanians.

AAAs are vital lifelines for older Pennsylvanians. Your proposed allocation in the 2024-2025 budget showed your commitment to supporting the AAAs, but the ultimate lack of funding has forced many AAAs to reduce services and expand waitlists. We urge you to increase AAA funding to meet the growing needs of our older population.

We celebrate the excellent work that is already being done by your administration to support older Pennsylvanians, and we respectfully ask that the 2025-2026 budget reflect increased support for this work. Investing in our older population is a positive step toward a better life for Pennsylvanians of all ages.

Warm regards,

Dr. Melanie Titzel

Melanie Titzel, Ph.D., State Chair

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