

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
September 15, 2005
9:30 a.m.

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: REPORT BACK – Funding Of Senior Ombudsman Agreement With The Area 4 Agency on Aging

On September 7, 2005, your Board requested information on funding a Senior Ombudsman agreement with the Area 4 Agency on Aging (A4AA). This report addresses that request.

BACKGROUND:

Sacramento County is one of the seven counties served by Ombudsman Services of Northern California (OSNC), a non-profit organization. OSNC advocates on behalf of older residents of long-term care facilities and investigates complaints of abuse in those facilities. Trained volunteers provide most of the service delivery for the ombudsman program.

Funding is provided by A4AA as a pass through of federal Older Americans Act funds plus state, city and county funds. In 2003, as a component of California's Long Term Care Consumer Protection Initiative, ombudsman programs received additional funding from the federal Nursing Home Federal Citation Penalty Account to recruit, train and supervise additional volunteers.

DHHS has not provided funds for OSNC since fiscal year 2002/03. Currently OSNC receives \$211,643 from the State of California, of which 60% or \$126,985 is designated for services to Sacramento County long-term care facilities. This includes 46 skilled nursing and intermediate care facilities and over 700 residential care facilities for the elderly and adults. OSNC uses these funds for facility monitoring as well as complaint investigation activity. The State requires the ombudsman to conduct 4 visits per month to skilled nursing facilities and a minimum of annual visits to residential care facilities. The State does not require additional monitoring of adult residential care facilities and only requires investigations of abuse referrals. OSNC would like to continue monthly visits to all residential care facilities in Sacramento County.

DISCUSSION:

OSNC

Your Board received a request from OSNC for \$63,240 in County funding to reinstate its long-term care ombudsman services. This funding will provide for the cost of two part-time and half of one full-time ombudsman, as well as operating expenses. Additionally, OSNC will provide

approximately 5,000 hours of volunteer services with an estimated value of \$65,000, and administrative services valued at \$9,360.

Strategic Plan

Your Board approved the 2005 Strategic Plan for the System of Protection for Senior and Dependent Adults on May 10, 2005. The Strategic Plan identified the need to create a comprehensive and responsive system of protection across a range of both public and private sector organizations. The Plan priority includes the addition of case management capacity, including support positions.

Case Management Services

One of the specific recommendations, and top priorities, of the Strategic Plan was the increase of case-management services to the high-risk population of older seniors and dependent adults. The Strategic Plan calls for the development of three multi-disciplinary case management units by 2005 in the Adult Protective Services program.

Due to on-going funding issues in the Adult Protective Services (APS) program, these recommendations have not yet been implemented. Sacramento County fully expended its state allocation for APS in 2004/05 and is projected to do the same in 2005/06.

The cost to fund the three case management units is \$1,008,067. Federal revenues would fund 45%, or \$453,630, of this cost. There is no additional state funding available. As part of the Strategic Plan, task force members are working on a way to collaboratively finance the remaining costs. Financing may include contributions from hospital systems, cities and other sources. The Task Force is in the process of developing a funding plan and DHHS will return to your Board mid year with the proposed plan.

The Department recommends supporting the priorities determined in the strategic planning process. Funding individual programs without consideration of the priorities developed by a community driven process would set a precedent that devalues the strategic plan, as well as, the County staff and community partners who spent so much time, effort and dedication in developing it. Instead, if County General Funds are available, we recommend beginning to fund APS case management capacity.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:

OSNC has requested \$63,240 in funding to reinstate its long-term care ombudsman services. Because these funds will be used to match other federal funding sources within A4AA, approval of this request would require an allocation of County General Funds.

CONCLUSION:

DHHS recognizes the value of the ombudsman services provided by OSNC. However, given the limited funding available for APS services and the 25% increase of incident reports over the last three years, the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan for the System of Protection

for Senior and Dependent Adults should be honored. Any additional funding should first be used to fund case management services.

Respectfully submitted:

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