



# Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging

## 2023 State Legislative Priorities

### SUPPORT UNPAID FAMILY CAREGIVERS

**Increase Illinois Family Caregiver Act funding from \$4m to \$6m** to support unpaid family caregivers through the Area Agency on Agings' Caregiver Resource Centers. An AARP study found there are over 1.5 m caregivers in Illinois providing 1.4 billion hours of unpaid work annually with an estimated value of \$18.5 billion! Support for unpaid caregivers is proven to delay nursing home placement and save Medicaid dollars.

*A 75-year-old male caregiver to his sister states the T-Care assessment was "to see if you are under stress and help you find resources . . . without that, I was just floating on my own"; I want policy makers to know that caregivers need "reliable expert assistance that they can trust and depend on." I want society "to realize that when trying to help someone with dementia, you don't have any sense of how to go about it . . . without help, you are just struggling in the dark."*

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### INCREASE STATE FUNDING TO COMBATING SOCIAL ISOLATION ...

**From \$1m to \$2m** to support innovative programs to alleviate isolation among older people. Social Isolation is a public health emergency. Studies find that weak social connections can shorten a person's life by 15 years -- roughly the same impact as smoking 15 cigarettes a day!

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### INCREASE STATE FUNDING FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DISORDERS...

**From \$1m to \$2m** to "fill the gaps" in services and fund evidence-based training for caregivers. Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death and most expensive disease in America.

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### SUSTAIN STATE FUNDING FOR HOME DELIVERED MEALS

This funding meets increased demands for meals, supports the skyrocketing costs for food, gas, and labor; allows enhancements to the program like culturally responsive meals, medically tailored/special diets, as well as two meals per day for older adults at high nutritional risk. In FY22, 53% of HDM recipients had High Nutritional Risk Scores which equals 42,204 persons across the state.

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