

May 22, 2015

Nutrition Committee Members
Area Agency on Aging Board Members
c/o Dane County AAA
2865 N. Sherman Avenue
Madison, WI 53704

Dear Board and Committee Members,

After carefully reviewing the proposed changes to the Nutrition Allocation formula, and the significant negative impact it would have on our agency and our ability to serve the needs of older adults in our community, I am respectfully requesting that the current level of funding be continued through 2016 while establishing equitable standards of operations. The problem with proposing funding formulas, as witnessed through the discrepancies in the Case Management Formula, is that by weighting census numbers so heavily, true needs/impact is not adequately measured or funded.

I would like the committees to take a closer look at the actual numbers served; percentages of population served, and also adequately weigh the factors of poverty and minority populations. The disparity between programs that operate 5 days per week vs. 1 or 2 days per week, with attendance of less than 10 daily participants needs to be addressed, rather than attempting to "equitably" distribute limited funding with a "one size fits all" approach.

The South Madison Coalition of the Elderly currently provides nutrition programs to some of Dane County's neediest older adults at 3 meal sites, serving 5 days a week and over 21,000 meals in 2014, the largest provider of all 15 Focal points. We already subsidize this program between \$17-20,000 per year (through fund raising) and can no longer sustain the program at current funding levels, let alone additional cuts through the proposed funding formulas. We would hate to have to discontinue these programs which serve the most vulnerable, isolated, poor older adults in the city, many of whom rely on their daily noon meal to provide over 40% of their daily food consumption. Many of the participants in our program have limited mobility and physical and mental health issues, so their participation in the daily meal program is not necessarily one of "choice" that many other over 60 adults have based on their life circumstances, but one of basic necessity, another factor that is not considered in the development of these funding formulas.

I appreciate your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Marcia Hendrickson
Executive Director, South Madison Coalition of the Elderly