Home and Community-Based Care for the Elderly

2013 United Way Position

Florida’s United Ways urge the 2013 Florida Legislature to maximize funding for Community Care for the Elderly and Home Care for the Elderly.

CURRENT SITUATION: The percentage of elders living in Florida is higher than any other state, with almost one out of every six Florida residents being 65 years old or older: 17.2 percent (3.3 million) of the state’s 18.8 million residents. By 2030, that percentage is expected to swell to 27 percent.

The annual cost for nursing home care is between $55,000 and $75,000, and is increasing every year. As these costs outpace the ability of people to pay, less costly community-based alternatives have become more in demand.

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs reports that “Florida has provided alternatives to nursing home placement since 1982, with the goal of serving elders in the least restrictive settings. The two most cost-effective community-based programs are Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) and Home Care for the Elderly (HCE). These programs are not funded by Medicaid. They are state-funded programs that assist frail elders who are ineligible for Medicaid to remain in their homes and in other less restrictive settings for as long as possible, thereby enhancing their quality of life and avoiding costly nursing home placements.

Community Care for the Elderly helps functionally impaired seniors live at home by providing personal care (help with bathing, dressing, etc.) home repairs, home-delivered meals, caregiver respite, care management, adult day care, emergency alert response, and medical transportation. Home Care for the Elderly helps Medicaid nursing home eligible seniors by providing a stipend of $106 per month for home care, nutritional supplements, and incontinence products.

PROPOSED CHANGES: Maximize funding for Community Care for the Elderly and Home Care for the Elderly.

JUSTIFICATION: CCE and HCE not only allow seniors to maintain a higher quality of life, help them maintain their dignity, and employ thousands of Floridians, they also cost far less than nursing home care. Investing our resources in these services saves taxpayer dollars: Projections show that if the 667 seniors on the CCE waiting list who were placed into nursing homes at a cost of $17 million in 2010-11 had instead been provided CCE services at a cost of $3.5 million, taxpayers would have saved $13.5 million. Likewise, the state would have saved $2 million had the 92 seniors on the HCE wait list been provided HCE services costing $333,000 rather than being placed into nursing homes at a total cost of $2.3 million.

FISCAL IMPACT: The 2012 Florida Legislature appropriated $49.4 million for HCE and CCE
For additional information, please contact the United Way of Florida at: (850) 488-8276.