

**Testimony of
Greg Olsen, Acting Director
New York State Office for the Aging**



**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing
Conducted By
Senate Finance Committee
Assembly Ways & Means Committee**

**Monday, February 13, 2012
Hearing Room B
Legislative Office Building
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York**

Good morning Senator DeFrancisco, Assemblyman Farrell, distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees, Assemblymember Millman and Senator Valesky. My name is Greg Olsen and I am the Acting Director of the New York State Office for the Aging.

Governor Cuomo's second Executive Budget expands on the historic reforms enacted last year to continue building a *new* New York. As a result of the tough decisions and bipartisan cooperation of the past year, the State is able to close the current deficit without broad cuts, new taxes, fees or gimmicks. At the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), we are restructuring the way in which services are delivered so that they are person-centered and responsive to the needs of those we serve. The agency has developed new partnerships, and continues to strengthen existing partnerships within the community that serves and advocates for older adults, and I will continue to look to our diverse partners to help us carry out our core mission and achieve the goals established by the Governor.

The New York State Office for the Aging promotes and administers programs and services for the 3.7 million New Yorkers who are 60 years of age and older. NYSOFA's core mission is to help older adults remain independent for as long as possible through advocacy, the development and delivery of person-centered, consumer-oriented, and cost-effective policies, programs and services. In carrying out this mission, NYSOFA provides leadership and direction to 59 county based Area Agencies on Aging, and to a network of public and private organizations which serve and help empower older adults and their families.

Governor Cuomo's 2012-13 Executive Budget continues its commitment to our core programs and services, assuring that those we serve continue to receive cost-effective, high quality services that support their independence. As such, the Executive Budget preserves funding for key programs including the Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP), which provides non-medical in-home services, case management, respite and ancillary services to frail older adults, most of whom are low-income but not eligible for Medicaid; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is used primarily for home delivered meals to frail older adults who are unable to prepare meals for themselves; the Community Services for the Elderly Program (CSE), which is designed to improve the ability of communities to assist older adults who need help in order to remain in their homes and to participate in family and community life, and NY Connects: *Choices for Long Term Care*, a statewide, locally based no wrong door/point of entry system that provides one stop access to free, objective and comprehensive Information and Assistance (I&A) on long term care.

The Governor has also charged us, as he has his other agencies, to find smarter, more efficient ways to deliver our services, leverage other resources and facilitate partnerships to further our goals. We have, through a variety of strategic partnerships and with our county area agency on aging and other partners accomplished a lot in 2011 including:

- Training over 3,760 individuals with multiple chronic conditions at 387 sites throughout New York how to manage their multiple chronic conditions saving almost \$3 million in health care costs. We also trained 88 Master Trainers, increasing our statewide capacity.

- Testing innovative care transitions models designed to reduce preventable hospitalizations, resulting in only 7.8 % readmitted within the first 30 days after their hospital discharge, far exceeding the baseline rate by an approximate 50% further reduction in readmission.
- Using NY Connects to leverage federal funds to allow for the first time the Veterans Administration to purchase services for nursing home and Medicaid at risk veterans through the aging network,
- Being ranked first in the nation in the number of home delivered meal recipients and number 2 in number of meals provided. New York ranked number 1 in number of congregate meals served and second in number of people served.
- Being ranked in the top 5 nationally for state units on aging providing case management, personal care services, and nutrition counseling.
- Recruited and training over 540 volunteers to prevent and detect Medicaid and Medicare fraud. These volunteers provided 1,564 hours of time to conduct 415 outreach events. The events reached 68,641 individuals. Held 6 Senior Medicare Patrol Summits along with federal, state and local agencies, law enforcement and community groups to draw attention to the issue and fraud mitigation efforts.

As you can see from these few examples, NYSOFA has been proactive in working to improve our services and advocacy for older adults by increasing partnerships and integrating our work with other agencies and entities to utilize resources. We look forward to continuing down this path to create systems that are seamless for the consumer and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.