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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - THE AGING IN COMMUNITY  
OF 2014

Introduced By: Representatives Blazejewski, Diaz, Slater, Hull, and Bennett

Date Introduced: February 06, 2014

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 42 of the General Laws entitled "STATE AFFAIRS AND  
2 GOVERNMENT" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 66.11

4 THE AGING IN COMMUNITY ACT OF 2014

5 **42-66.11-1. Short title. --** This chapter shall be known and may be cited as "The Aging  
6 in Community Act of 2014."

7 **42-66.11-2. Legislative findings. --** The legislature finds and declares:

8 (1) The number of Rhode Islanders sixty-five (65) years of age and older is projected by  
9 the state planning office to grow from 152,000 in 2010 to 189,000 in 2020 and to 248,000 by the  
10 year 2030.

11 (2) The 2010 U.S. Census established that Rhode Island had the highest percentage of  
12 persons age eighty-five (85) years and older, an age group that has the highest dependency needs  
13 and an increased need for long-term care services and supports.

14 (3) Surveys consistently show most older persons prefer to remain in their own homes  
15 and community for as long as possible.

16 (4) Community-based support services and programs such as meals on wheels, caregiver  
17 support and respite services and senior centers, play important roles in helping older persons to  
18 "Age in Community" thereby preventing or postponing institutionalization, reducing Medicaid

1 costs for long-term care facilities, and reducing caregiver burden.

2 (5) Adequate funding for demonstrated cost-effective home and community support  
3 services such as meals on wheels, caregiver support and respite programs is essential to reducing  
4 the use of long-term care facilities by low care residents, to saving Medicaid costs for the state,  
5 and to helping unpaid caregivers keep frail elders and adults with disabilities living at home.

6 (6) State funds to support meals on wheels and respite services decreased by sixty-three  
7 percent (63%) from fiscal year 2003 to fiscal year 2014 and there exists a waiting list for these  
8 essential services.

9 **42-66.11-3. The aging in community fund - Purpose and establishment. --** There is  
10 hereby created and established the "Aging in Community Fund" within the division of elderly  
11 affairs in the department of human services. The purpose of the fund is to provide grants to meals  
12 on wheels and caregiver support and respite programs that promote older persons' ability to  
13 remain living in their own homes and communities. For fiscal year 2014-2015, the general  
14 assembly hereby appropriates an additional five hundred seventy-five thousand dollars  
15 (\$575,000) for aging in community grants to be allocated as follows: three hundred thousand  
16 dollars (\$300,000) in added funding for meals on wheels to reduce waiting lists and to provide for  
17 emergency food distributions and two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$275,000) in added  
18 funds for caregiver support and respite services. The secretary of health and human services shall  
19 report to the governor, the legislature and the long-term care coordinating council chair on the  
20 status of any waiting lists for meals on wheels, caregiver support and respite services and state  
21 funded home and community-based long-term care as part of the annual budget request.

22 **42-66.11-4. The aging in community plan. --** The chair of the state long-term care  
23 coordinating council shall create an aging in community subcommittee whose purpose shall be to  
24 develop a plan to provide the needed infrastructure and program improvements in support  
25 services, housing and transportation that will enable the state's growing elder population to safely  
26 remain living at home and in community settings. The aging in community plan shall include an  
27 inventory of available services, identification of service and program gaps and resource needs. In  
28 addition to members of the long-term care coordinating council, the subcommittee shall include  
29 those members of the state's academic community with expertise in aging services and  
30 community-based long-term supports and services as the council deems appropriate.

31 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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1           This act would establish and create a fund within the department of elderly affairs to  
2 assist the elderly population to remain living in their homes and communities. The initial  
3 appropriation for the fund would be an additional five hundred seventy-five thousand dollars  
4 (\$575,000) to be distributed in grants of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in added  
5 funding for the meals on wheels program and two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars  
6 (\$275,000) in added funding for caregiver support and respite services.

7           The act would also require that the Long-Term Care Coordinating Council create a  
8 subcommittee to develop a plan to provide needed improvements in support services, housing and  
9 transportation for the elderly and to inventory available services, identify service and program  
10 gaps and resource needs.

11           This act would take effect on July 1, 2014.

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