



**TESTIMONY**

presented by

**Lilliam Barrios-Paoli**

**Commissioner**

at a hearing on

*the Department for the Aging's FY 2010 Executive Budget*

before the

**City Council's Aging and Finance Committees**

on

**Monday, May 18, 2009**

**12:30 PM**

at

**City Hall**

**New York, NY**

Good morning, Chairs Arroyo and Weprin and Subcommittee Chair Mark Viverito and members of the Aging and Finance Committees. I am Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, the Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA). Here with me today is Angeles Pai, Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Fiscal Operations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the Department for the Aging's Fiscal Year 2010 Executive Budget.

The FY 2010 Executive Budget is projected at \$240,634,912 in baseline funding and includes allocations of \$91 million to support senior centers; \$28.9 million for home delivered meals; \$22.7 million for case management services and \$27 million for home care for non-Medicaid eligible homebound seniors. In addition, the FY 2010 preliminary budget allocates \$4 million for caregiver support services.

As you know, this is a very difficult year for all government services, including the Department for the Aging. DFTA—like all city agencies—has had to reduce its budget in response to declining city revenues. During these challenging times, DFTA staff has continued to work creatively and efficiently to minimize the impact on New York City seniors as much as possible. Certainly, there are consequences to all reductions, as each of our programs touches the lives of older adults throughout the City. That being said, DFTA has worked to make strategic decisions in its budget to ensure that the agency is able to continue to meet the needs of a wide range of older New Yorkers through programs and services that have the most far-reaching impact on their lives. I would like to use this opportunity to provide a briefing on DFTA's proposed budget reductions for FY 2010.

#### Preliminary Plan

DFTA was required to further trim its budget by 7% of city funding, or \$9.6 million as part of the preliminary budget plan. To accomplish this, DFTA recommended reductions to administration and core services. During past PEGS, DFTA did everything possible to avoid reductions to our core services. However, in the January PEG, this proved impossible. Each of our core services receive a majority of funding through city tax-levy. Therefore, when tax-levy savings are required, it is very difficult to avoid cuts to these services. In DFTA's preliminary budget plan, we recommended the following reductions: \$1.8 million in administrative spending; \$1.4 million in

savings by scaling back a planned expansion to the home delivered meals program; \$1.1 million to case management programs; and \$5.3 million to senior center programs.

In order to help meet the reduction target outlined in the Preliminary plan for the senior center budget, DFTA has made the decision to eliminate \$1 million in funding for the Congregate Weekend Meals program, which provides additional funding to senior centers so that they may offer a take home meal to their members on Friday, which can be consumed over the weekend. While this program is well utilized by some senior centers, overall it is underutilized across the senior center network. In short, the elimination of the Congregate Weekend Meal program is regrettable but will create less of an impact on senior center consumers than reductions to congregate weekday meals and other core functions of senior centers. DFTA was also obligated to examine additional options for reductions in the senior center budget and has decided to implement a 5% across-the-board cut to all senior centers.

#### Executive Plan

Upon further examination and consultation with our community partners, the Department made some central changes in regard to the planned reductions in the Executive budget. For one, due to the recent transition of case management contractors, it became clear that this program could not sustain a reduction during this critical juncture. Therefore, \$1.1 million was restored to case management in the Executive Budget. For home delivered meals, \$870,000 was restored in the Executive budget, which when coupled with funding from the stimulus package returns the home delivered meals budget to more than previous level.

As part of its Executive Budget plan, DFTA recommended eliminating the over \$7 million in baseline funds from its budget which had been historically allocated by the Borough Presidents to senior programs. While the Borough President allocations support valuable programs and services throughout the aging network, DFTA will no longer be able to allocate baseline funding in this manner as such funding must be distributed through a competitive process according to the City's procurement rules.

### Moving Forward in Senior Center Services

Despite our challenges, DFTA is committed to moving forward in a planning process for the future of the City's network of senior centers. Though funding is limited at this time, I am confident that together with all stakeholders, we can craft a Request for Proposals (RFP) for congregate programs which will serve as a vehicle to strengthen the network while supporting a diversity of programs. DFTA is now in the process of developing a formalized consultative process with the goal of achieving consensus on the senior center RFP. For the first phase of the consultative process, I have asked the five primary umbrella organizations that represent senior services providers to meet with their membership to discuss their goals for a model senior center. Recommendations born out of this process will be submitted to the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM), which will convene a citywide task force of stakeholders to review all feedback and develop consensus around the concepts for the senior center RFP. I invite and encourage the members of this Committee to be a part of the larger task force. Additionally, I have asked NYAM to administer focus groups with older adults to ensure that services are designed to meet the needs and preferences of New Yorkers age 60 and older. I expect the concept paper for the RFP to be released in the fall of 2009 and the RFP to be released in early 2010.

There are a few concepts that I have already identified thorough conversations with providers that I would like to explore during this process. For one, I think everyone would agree that nutrition is key to a successful senior center program but that there is room for flexibility in how meals are provided. Some centers may prefer to have a traditional kitchen and cook their meals, while others would rather use catering or serve dinner as opposed to lunch. We also need to do some thinking around identifying the basic components of a senior center, so that we can have a base by which to measure senior centers outside of simply counting meals. I would also like to explore the possibility of utilizing outside contractors to provide specialty services such as technology, fitness, arts and culture or services to special populations. This could be accomplished through a separate RFP for services or by allowing each center a finite amount of funding to purchase specialty services from an approved list of providers. This type of service provision would allow centers to enrich their programming without having to become experts in fitness, technology and the like.

I welcome your input and on-going dialogue as we move forward both in the budget process and in our planning process for the senior center RFP. Despite our challenges, I am confident that by working together we can persevere in our mission to support older New Yorkers through quality programs and services. I am now available to take your questions.

# FOR THE RECORD



Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies



The Voice of the Human Services Community



Council of Senior  
Centers and Services

## Testimony before the New York City Council Aging Committee

David Weprin, Chair of the Finance Committee

Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Chair of the Aging Committee

Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chair of the Subcommittee on Senior Centers

## Hearing on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2010 Executive Budget

May 18, 2009

### Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairs Weprin, Arroyo, Mark-Viverito and Councilmembers. This testimony is submitted by the Council of Senior Centers and Services (CSCS), UJA-Federation of New York, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA), United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), and the Human Services Council (HSC). Together we represent hundreds of agencies providing social services to New Yorkers in all five boroughs.

In light of the growing older adult population in our City, it is absolutely necessary to maintain, and in many cases, increase funding for the programs and services that allow older New Yorkers to "age in place." In these challenging economic times, we must be keenly aware of how budget reductions impact our communities. Low-income older adults have been negatively impacted by the instability of the economic crisis. Living off of fixed incomes, they are experiencing rising costs of basic necessities; such as food, housing, heat, and transportation. Additionally, seniors who are losing their retirement savings will be unable to replace the monies that they have lost; they will likely be in need of meals and services over time.

We are here to express our shared concerns for the over \$18 million in cuts to the Department for the Aging (DFTA) in the Mayor's budget, and the over \$22 million in additional funding that we are asking the City Council to restore for Fiscal Year 2010. We are greatly concerned that the proposed budget cut for FY 2010 will harm community-based programs and services, as well as, the poor and vulnerable older adults that are most in need.

While the challenges of the economic downturn are coupled with the growing need to provide services to older adults we appreciate the new leadership at DFTA. We are pleased that Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli has been able to reverse most of the preliminary funding cuts to Case Management and Home Delivered Meals programs, however, we remain concerned over the existence of waiting lists which undermines the effectiveness of these important programs and the negatively impact the City's frail and homebound older adults. We look forward to working with the Commissioner as she seeks to re-focus the agency, address service delivery issues and find creative ways to design services for older New Yorkers.

We commend the City Council for its vigilant, ongoing support for Aging services, and we know that challenging choices will be made when negotiating this year's City budget. We urge that the City Council maintain its commitment to aging services and older New Yorkers and work with the Administration to restore the following services in the FY2010 budget:

#### **FUNDING FOR CORE SUPPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF SENIOR CENTERS**

We are deeply concerned about the consistent reductions that aging programs have been receiving over the years, and that the FY 2010 Executive budget reflects cuts that further destabilize the City's ability to provide quality, community-based aging services. The cumulative cuts to senior center funding is especially disturbing including cuts to Borough President discretionary funding, City Council funding, DFTA across-the-board reductions and the elimination of the weekend meal program. The re-structuring of the Home Delivered Meals system has also created an \$8 million loss of funding for senior centers.

##### **Borough President's Funding**

This \$7.63 million allocation in Borough President discretionary funds support meals, transportation, case management services, elder abuse prevention programs, social adult day care, caregiver support programs, and enhancements for a variety of other senior services. We strongly advocate that the full \$7.63 million in Borough President funding remain within their control.

##### **Senior Center Funding**

DFTA funded senior center budgets for FY 2010 have been cut by \$5.27 million. Included in this reduction is the elimination of the weekend meal program, and a 5% across the board cut to all DFTA funded senior centers. Older New Yorkers rely on the many programs and services offered at senior centers which ultimately aid them in remaining in the comfort of their own homes and communities for as long as possible, averting more expensive and premature placement in higher levels of care. We are especially concerned about funding cuts to programs that provide food for older persons. Senior center providers are reporting an increased need for congregate meals, and one senior center has even begun turning seniors away because of lack of meals capacity in their lunch program. This allocation must be restored to ensure that older adults have continued access to an array of essential services at their centers including meals, health and wellness activities, socialization, and a variety of recreational, arts and cultural programming. Stable funding will enable senior centers to continue operating effectively and efficiently, and ensure that their infrastructure remains intact.

##### **Raw Food Costs**

This \$4.5 million allocation allows for an increase in raw food and infrastructure costs for DFTA's congregate and home delivered meals programs. Our agencies report an increased need for food among older adults; attending senior center congregate lunch programs, at food pantries, as well as a demand for cash assistance to buy groceries or pay rent. (See CSCS report, "Hunger Hurts", at [www.cscs-ny.org](http://www.cscs-ny.org))

##### **Transportation Operating Costs**

\$3 million in funding covers the transportation operating costs incurred by senior centers and other programs for older adults (i.e. insurance, fuel, maintenance of vans).

**Space/Equipment Costs**

\$1.95 million in funding for rent and facility costs at senior centers throughout the city offsets the rising costs that some senior centers pay in rent. Last year this funding was reduced by \$1.75 million.

**AGING SERVICES**

We also urge the City Council to restore the following critical services for innovative and essential programming:

**Home Delivered Meals Funding**

Since the preliminary budget, the administration has partially restored \$872,000 of its own cut to the Home Delivered Meals portfolio; we urge the City to add an additional \$561,000 to make the program whole. Although DFTA will continue to provide over 4 million home delivered meals annually, the elderly population continues to grow throughout the city and the nation. As DFTA consolidated 97 Home Delivered Meals contracts into 20 contracts citywide, now is not the time to limit funding for this program. As stated before, our member organizations have reported an increased demand for food throughout this economic downturn; at a minimum, funding for Home Delivered Meals needs to be fully restored to stabilize these programs.

Home Delivered Meals providers are experiencing lower than expected service levels, due in large part to referral bottlenecks within the case management system. We are urging DFTA to address this operational issue.

**City Council Discretionary Funds**

\$5.5 million (\$108,750 per Councilmember) in City Council discretionary funds is necessary to support the infrastructure of programs to older adults. With government contracts unable to adequately finance services and growing unmet need, these programmatic dollars serve a vital role in ensuring that the City's older adults have access to quality community-based aging services.

**NORC Supportive Service Program**

This \$1 million allocation supports 10 existing Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) that did not receive funding through DFTA's RFP process. These programs allow older adults to age within their own home and in their community with the supports needed to promote healthy aging, independence, and community-building through social services, medical services, educational and recreational activities, and volunteer opportunities.

**Information & Referral (Extended Services) :**

This \$1.5 million allocation funds 8 community-based programs to provide information in the client's respective languages about programs, services, benefits, entitlements and other resources for older adults, such as preventing seniors with dementia from being evicted from their homes, or finding new homes for homeless elderly. These programs have annually provide nearly 400,000 hours of case management services, helping older adults and their families in crisis.

**Healthy Aging Initiative:**

This \$1.35 million allocation funds 51 programs in senior centers that address the health and wellness needs of older adults by providing exercise classes, health screenings, nutrition education and chronic disease management.



### **Social Adult Day Care**

Funding for vital social adult day care services was eliminated mid-year at the time of the November budget modification in the amount of \$1.18 million for FY'09 and \$2.36 million for the outyears. We are deeply concerned that these critical programs, designed to serve as a lifeline and crucial support to frail, cognitively and/or physically impaired individuals, were defunded. These programs provide essential support to families and caregivers so they may work and have a respite from the daily stress of caregiving. It is estimated that approximately 1,000 fragile older individuals and their families are facing a crisis of care as a result of the elimination of the city's financial support for these services. Social adult day services are a far more cost-effective way to care for frail elders than nursing homes. We strongly recommend the restoration of this allocation for some of New York City's most vulnerable adults.

### **Elder Abuse**

We thank the City Council for working with DFTA to ensure that Elder Abuse funding was not eliminated at the time of the November budget modification; however, it was not permanently restored for the FY 2010 budget. This funding is the foundation of an effective network of social service providers, the District Attorney, other legal offices, DFTA, as well as other government agencies. Without funding, this network might cease to exist. With 1700 older persons seen annually by the DFTA Elder Abuse provider network, we strongly urge the City to continue funding Elder Abuse programs in the amount of \$850,000.

### **Geriatric Mental Health Initiative**

We support the restoration of \$2.4 million in funding for the *Geriatric Mental Health Initiative*, as administered through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. As you may know, older adults have the lowest utilization rates of mental health services of any age group. One of the biggest reasons behind this is stigma. For the past 3 years, the City Council recognized the need for mental health services for older adults and provided \$2.4 million in funding for the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative (GMHI). The funding enhanced existing mental health services and has allowed agencies to deliver services to seniors in settings where older adults already feel comfortable and receive other services, such as in their homes or in a senior center.

### **Conclusion**

We appreciate the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of funding restorations for a number of our key programs. Due to the projected growth among older adults throughout the coming years, it is essential that funding for these programs, at a minimum, be maintained. We are committed to working with the Council in any way possible to advocate for adequate resources for essential community based services for older New Yorkers.

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

Testimony of Christopher Wisniewski  
Director of Education  
Museum of the Moving Image  
Before the New York City Committee on  
Aging and  
Committee on Finance

May 18, 2009

Good Afternoon. My name is Christopher Wisniewski, and I am Director of Education at Museum of the Moving Image. Thank you Chairperson Maria Carmen del Arroyo and Chairman David Weprin, as well as the members of the Committee on Aging and Committee on Finance for the opportunity to speak before you today.

Like many of the city's cultural institutions, the Museum of the Moving Image is committed to educating a generationally diverse audience that includes school children, adults, and senior citizens. Our programs for seniors are vital to our mission and among the most successful and rewarding of the Museum's activities.

Every year, hundreds of seniors from the metropolitan area visit the Museum to participate in gallery tours. Since 2003, the Museum has also partnered with the Queens Interagency Council on Aging to offer Free Matinees for Seniors, in which seniors in the borough receive transportation to the Museum, enjoy a film, and are invited to tour the Museum's galleries.

In my testimony today, I would like to focus on two specific programs we offered in 2008 in partnership with two area senior centers. In spring 2008, the Department for the Aging, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York City Council sponsored the Seniors Meet the Arts initiative, which funded partnerships between cultural institutions and the city's senior centers. Through the program, the Museum presented multi-session cultural programs for senior citizens at two area senior centers, the Young Israel of Forest Hills Senior League and Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE)/Queens. The programs were collaborations between the senior center directors and the Museum's Education department. Over the course of several months, the seniors visited the Museum for gallery tours, participated in hands-on workshops in which they made their own stop-motion animations, enjoyed regular film screenings and discussion programs at the senior centers, and had the chance to tour the Kaufman-Astoria Studios.

The Museum Educators who facilitated the programs developed a strong emotional connection with the participants at both centers. Educator Mal Ahern writes, "I was struck by their friendliness, enthusiasm, and open-mindedness. It was inspirational to be surrounded by such active minds. Clearly, guests at both programs were hungry for intellectually engaging programs. I became very

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friendly with all of the participants, and looked forward to seeing them every other week. I was very touched that they felt the same about me."

Ahern's excitement about the programs was shared by the directors at both of the centers. Susan Rabinowitz of the Young Israel of Forest Hills Senior League explains, "The partnership proved to be a most extraordinary experience for our seniors. They were provided with opportunities that they could never have on their own. Building a close relationship with the Museum allowed us to select programs that were of interest to our members, and our members each and every time came back from their excursions exhilarated and energized." John Nagel of SAGE/Queens wrote with equal enthusiasm, "The SAGE/Queens partnership with Moving Image was a profound one for our participants. The highlight for our members was when they had the opportunity to make their own animations. This taught our members new technology they have never been exposed to. They were so proud of their creations and thrilled to have a copy of them. The program was special, because it made our members feel they were special. We are grateful for these moments of education, fun, and nostalgia."

Both Rabinowitz and Nagel expressed strong interest in continuing the program. At the end of the spring, Nagel wrote me a note reaffirming the sentiment, "We would like to continue this relationship if it is at all possible. Participants from SAGE/Queens really enjoyed themselves. Together, I am sure we can make the lives of our participants even better through the magic of the moving image."

Unfortunately, the Seniors Meet the Arts program was discontinued in fiscal year 2009. Lacking this vital support, the Museum has not been able to resume these programs but looks forward to continuing these partnerships if and when funding is restored.

Thank you.

Christopher Wisniewski  
*Director of Education*

# visions

services for the blind and visually impaired

**Testimony of Antoinette M. Emers  
Assistant Director of Community Outreach  
VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Executive Budget Hearing on the FY 2010 Budget  
Monday, May 18, 2009**

500 Greenwich St. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10013  
212-625-1616 [www.visionsvcb.org](http://www.visionsvcb.org)

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Antoinette M. Emers and I am the Assistant Director of Community Outreach of VISIONS/ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired a nonprofit agency promoting the independence each year of over 3500 people who are blind and visually impaired. More than half of the blind people we help each year are over the age of 60. All services are provided free of charge. No health insurance is required or billed.

VISIONS is an 83 year citywide vision rehabilitation and social service agency specializing in serving seniors who are blind or visually impaired, who are of low or limited income, who speak a language other than English (primarily Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin and Russian), have multiple disabilities and/or are African American or Latino with a higher risk for vision loss.

VISIONS unique combination of experience and knowledge of the senior population throughout the City enables our agency to reach those persons most at risk for vision loss but who are often difficult to reach. The total population of elderly in New York City is 1.3 million people 65 and over. An estimated 21% have a reported vision loss. This translates into 260,000 seniors, a number which is expected to double by 2030. The incidence of vision loss increases with age due to age-related eye diseases such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration and cataracts.

Today, we would like to make comments on the previous FY'09 DFTA cuts and now the proposed Executive cuts for the FY 2010 City Budget which greatly impact on the population we serve Citywide.

Last year, VISIONS experienced firsthand devastating cuts to our program operations. DFTA implemented a 3% percent budget cut in July 2008 while requesting us to maintain services at the same level. Then in December 2008, DFTA cancelled our intergenerational contract with only 6 weeks notice which was a loss of \$99,760 annually. This funding had allowed VISIONS to have 16-20 sighted youth provide 95 seniors who are blind and visually impaired in-home visits which consisted of escorting, shopping and reading services. Many of the seniors are isolated and live alone so they are very dependent on the valuable services provided by the youth. In turn, the seniors become mentors and provide guidance to the youth in decision-making skills, job opportunities and colleges to attend. This exchange of support between seniors and young people is immeasurable.

At the same time, VISIONS lost DFTA outreach funding of \$32,525 annually. This funding enabled VISIONS to provide training on vision loss to 110 out of the 329 DFTA senior centers. This training increased awareness of the center staff and seniors of vision loss and free vision rehabilitation services so that they can remain independent in

their respective communities. VISIONS trained 205 social workers at the 23 DFTA case management agencies on visions loss which has resulted in more seniors being referred for services. In order to maintain these services VISIONS Board made the decision to absorb the cost until June 2009 while we seek private funding to maintain services, a difficult task in this economy.

As of July 1, 2009 the proposed cuts to eliminate the Borough President and City Council discretionary funding would mean an additional funding loss of \$100,000 for VISIONS. We must implore you to restore the 28.5 million proposed cuts for FY10 which will be on top of the 16.1 million cuts to the DFTA budget. The cuts will be catastrophic to an ever-increasing senior population. Shifting the burden from the city to nonprofits is an unwise decision. The senior service system that is already overburdened and under funded for crucial services provided to a very vulnerable and poverty-stricken population. While we understand we are in a financial crisis we too need a financial bailout package like Wall Street. New York City seniors deserve better and the nonprofits organization like VISIONS need the opportunity to continue to maintain critical services in these very challenging times.

In closing, we say **RESTORE, RESTORE and RESTORE** to ensure that seniors who are blind and visually impaired can obtain the necessary services to remain independent in their City.



**CITY OF NEW YORK  
PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND**

**JAMES P. MOLINARO  
PRESIDENT**

**BOROUGH HALL, STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. 10301**

**STATEMENT OF JAMES P. MOLINARO  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT OF STATEN ISLAND**

**BEFORE**

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
COMMITTEE ON AGING  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SENIOR CENTERS**

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
CITY HALL  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**May 18, 2009**

HONORABLE CHAIRPERSONS, DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS, COMMUNITY ADVOCATES, SERVICE PROVIDERS AND SENIOR CITIZENS FROM AROUND THE CITY:

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK IN FAVOR OF MAINTAINING BOROUGH PRESIDENT-FUNDED AGING SERVICES AND AGAINST ANY OTHER REDUCTIONS FOR OUR ELDERLY POPULATION.

ON DECEMBER 4, 2008, I CAME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGING AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SENIOR CENTERS TO TESTIFY ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING'S (DFTA) ATTEMPT TO DEFUND BOROUGH PRESIDENT AGING FUNDS AND APPLY THEM TO A NOW SUSPENDED MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE. AT THE TIME, FIVE OF OUR STATEN ISLAND PROGRAMS WERE DEFUNDED RETROACTIVELY TO JULY 1, 2008 AND THE REST WERE SCHEDULED TO BE DEFUNDED THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR. FORTUNATELY, THE MODERNIZATION PROJECT WAS PLACED ON HOLD AS A NEW DFTA COMMISSIONER WAS APPONTED, AND THE FUNDS WERE RESTORED.

FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010 HOWEVER, DFTA HAS CUT THE ENTIRE BP ALLOCATION IN EACH OF THE FIVE BOROUGHES, LEAVING THE CITY COUNCIL WITH THE OPTION TO RESTORE THE FUNDING OR ELIMINATE CORE SENIOR SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE CITY. PREVIOUSLY, THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET CONTAINED AN ANNUAL BP/DFTA CUT OF \$533,000, WHICH WAS RESTORED EACH YEAR THEOUGH THE CITY COUNCIL. AS A RESULT, COUNCIL ACTION HAS ALLOWED THESE IMPORTANT SERVICES TO REMAIN CONSTANT IN BOTH GOOD AND BAD TIMES.

FOR FY 2010, THE BP/DFTA CUT EXCEEDS \$7.5M. HISTORICALLY, THE STATEN ISLAND PORTION OF BP/DFTA FUNDS HAS BEEN \$858,487. THIS LEVEL OF FUNDING HAS REMAINED INTACT OVER SEVERAL ADMINISTRATIONS, GOING BACK OVER TWO DECADES. FOR STATEN ISLAND, THESE FUNDS REPRESENT LONG-TERM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS TO ADDRESS UNDERSERVED NEEDS FOR OUR SENIOR CITIZENS, RANGING FROM HOME CARE, HOME DELIVERED MEALS, CONGREGATE MEALS, TRANSPORTATION, ADULT DAY CARE FOR ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA PATIENTS, MINOR HOME REPAIRS AND A HOST OF OTHER SERVICES.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT DISCRETIONARY FUNDS, IN DIFFERENT AMOUNTS FOR ALL FIVE BOROUGHES, WERE NEGOTIATED BY THE FIVE BOROUGH PRESIDENTS DURING THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE ERA AND HAVE REMAINED CONSTANT TO DATE. WHEN THE NEW CITY CHARTER TOOK EFFECT IN 1990, THSES DISCRETIONARY FUNDS WERE GRANDFATHERED INTO THE ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS AS TAX LEVY FUNDS AND CONTRACTED ANNUALLY THROUGH DFTA UNDER PROCUREMENT POLICY BOARD RULES, SECTION 1-02(E).



AT SOME POINT, THE CITY BASELINED THESE FUNDS TO DFTA AS A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS. OVER TIME, THESE FUNDS – ALTHOUGH STILL ALLOCATED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS BY THE FIVE BOROUGH PRESIDENTS – WERE SUBSUMED AND INTERMINGLED INTO DFTA'S OVERALL, NON-DISCRETIONARY BUDGET.

OVER THE YEARS, THE MAJORITY OF THESE ALLOCATIONS HAVE UNDERGONE REVIEW AND SIGN-OFF AT THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CONTRACT SERVICES, THE LAW DEPARTMENT AND THE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE VIA THE CONTRACT REGISTRATION PROCESS. IN ADDITION, DFTA CONDUCTED ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REVIEWS, FISCAL ASSESSMENTS AND ONGOING MONITORING. TO DATE, THE PROGRAMS HAVE CONTINUED TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE THE NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS LIVING THROUGHOUT THE FIVE BOROUGHES.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED HERE THAT THESE SENIOR SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS ALLOCATED YEARLY BY THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT WERE DONE IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL ADVOCATES FOR SENIORS AND HAVE ADDRESSED VERY REAL STATEN ISLAND NEEDS SUCH AS THE GLARING SHORTFALL OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND THE NEED TO SUPPLEMENT EXISTING SERVICES WITH ADDITIONAL MEALS, HOMECARE AND SENIOR CENTER PROGRAMS. INDEED, THESE ENHANCEMENTS HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED OVER THE YEARS BY THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT TO DIFFERENT PROVIDERS, WHEN RFPS WERE AWARDED BY DFTA FOR THE SERVICES. WITHOUT THESE CRUCIAL FUNDS, OUR SENIORS STAND TO LOSE NOT THE ONLY SERVICES PROVIDED BY 16 STATEN ISLAND BP-FUNDED DFTA PROGRAMS, BUT ALSO THE COMMITMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL ELECTED TO LOCAL OFFICE IN LIEU OF AN UNELECTED, FACELESS PANEL LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN.

IN CLOSING, NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE CITY COUNCIL TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RESTORE THESE IMPORTANT SENIOR SERVICES, AND IF SO, TO WHAT DEGREE. OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS ARE COUNTING ON IT. AND IN THE EVENT THAT THE RECENT LOSS OF CITY REVENUE RESULTS IN A REDUCED BUDGET LINE FOR BOROUGH PRESIDENT/DFTA FUNDS, I AM URGING THE COUNCIL AND DFTA TO ASSIST IN TRANSITION OF CORE SERVICES IN AN ORDERLY MANNER, INSTEAD OF ABRUPTLY TERMINATING PROGRAMS.

I HAVE ATTACHED A LISTING OF STATEN ISLAND PROGRAMS CURRENTLY FUNDED BY BP/DFTA FUNDS IN FISCAL YEAR 2009 FOR THE COMMITTEE'S INFORMATION.

THANK YOU.

Last updated 1/22/09

**NOTE: for FY '09, DFTA has classified \$798,487 as "baselined" and only \$60,000 as "Council Discretionary."**

FY '09 Department for the Aging Borough President allocations, approved on January 15, 2009 (sixteen programs):

CASC/ New Lane Senior Center, \$91,496

CASC/Frail Elderly Transportation, \$39,462

CASC/Forever Young, Cassidy-Coles, South Beach Senior Centers & Dialysis Program, \$10,000 (\$1,500 to each sr. center, and \$5,500 to dialysis)

CASC Transportation, \$325,597

CSS-RSVP/SERVE, \$16,674

CYO Senior Guild Luncheon Program, \$11,116

JCC Kosher Nutrition, \$88,652

Richmond Home Needs Services, \$74,108

Richmond Senior Svcs./Project Share, \$14,981 (direct funding was incorporated into DFTA)

NYC HHC - Seaview Hosp. Adult Day Care, \$46,317

SI Interagency Council on Aging, \$46,317

SI Meals on Wheels, \$60,212

SI Comm. Svc. Friendship Clubs/New Dorp Saturday Program, \$18,753

Alzheimer's Foundation of SI, \$4,782

Catholic Charities Community Services Stapleton, W. Brighton & Mariners Harbor Sr. Centers, \$6,000 (\$2,000 each sr. center)

Central Family Life Center, \$4,020

Total Approved: \$858,487

# STATEN ISLAND INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL FOR THE AGING, INC.

c/o Sea View Hospital-Administration Building-Room 123  
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Phone (718) 667-3162 Fax (718) 667-8063  
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## 2008-2009 Officers

Lee Vaccaro	President
Cynthia Roberti	1st Vice President
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## NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL BUDGET HEARINGS NEW YORK CITY FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE AGING COMMITTEE AND THE SUB-COMMITTEE FOR SENIOR CENTERS.

MAY 18, 2009

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Richmond Senior Services.  
Richmond University Medical Ctr.  
(RUMC)-Behavioral Health Services  
RJR Paratransit Corp.  
RSVP/SERVE  
Safe Harbor HC Services.  
Sak & Rampulla, LLP.  
Sea View Hosp. Rehab & Home  
Secure Care I  
SI Bank & Trust(Div. of Sovereign Bank)  
SI Center for Independent Living  
SICS Friendship Clubs  
SI Heart Society  
Sisters of Charity Housing Dev.  
SI University Hospital  
SS Cosmas & Damian Hum Svcs. Ctr.  
St. Elizabeth Ann's HC & RC  
St. Nicholas Home, Inc.  
Stella Orion HC Agency  
Sunrise Sr. Living of SI  
TD Bank  
University Hospice  
Verrazano NII  
Victory State Bank  
VNA - SI  
VNS CHOICE  
VNS of NY  
Volunteers of America  
YMCA/North & South-SI

On behalf of the Staten Island Inter-Agency Council for Aging, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony today. The Staten Island Inter-Agency Council for Aging (IAC) is an advocacy group, established to identify and address the needs of Staten Island's seniors, comprised of over 70 organizations who provide services to the older population. The mission of the IAC is to facilitate and promote programs and services for our aging population, advocating for their healthcare, housing, education, social, financial and transportation needs and is committed to their well-being.

Our Borough President and Councilmen have for over twenty years continually supported the efforts of the many senior services through their discretionary funding. For the year/end 2009 DFTA had decided that the Borough Presidents should no longer have the ability to make the determination as to what services should be funded. They suspended funding immediately for 5 agencies and indicated the other what was formerly known as BP funded services would be safe only for 2009 and in actuality planned to use that funding (which would have been taken from senior transportation to kosher meals) for the new concept of a senior center which was the third phase of the Mayor's modernization of senior services. The only reason the funding was restored to the 5 was that the SC RFP was defeated. Sadly the modernization of services have proven in many instances not to have worked, because it was not based in reality and the Senior Center RFP was but another example. Modernization has only increased the cost and increased the bureaucracy.

Obviously because of the very difficult economic times cuts have to be made to services, yet these services have never received the funding that truly met the demand and so theoretically have been cut already and already have received actual reductions. Staffing has never been sufficient. Is this a way of actually just phasing out all services --- are they in fact being set up for failure. Why then would another Senior Center RFP be in the works for next year --- rather than working with those programs that are effective --- mentor those that require assistance and close those that are truly not functioning.

The discretionary funding must be restored to the Borough Presidents as only they really know the services that are needed in their respective boroughs, as on Staten

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Mutual of America  
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Neighborhood Housing Svs. of SI  
New Broadview Manor  
Northfield Bank  
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NYC Dept. for the Aging  
NY Public Library  
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Volunteers of America  
VMCA/North & South-SI

Island, we would lose the only senior transportation available that is a life-saver to so many seniors as our existing transportation system is so lacking. I am not concerned about the IAC as we are not direct services but the network that gives the services and seniors the connection to each other and enhances the ability of the provider to serve but if it meant giving our funding to a direct service provider then so be it. My concern is the senior and the services they need to remain independent and have a quality of life that is reasonable and offers them dignity - safety --- and some comfort.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dunn  
Executive Director  
Staten Island Inter-Agency Council for Aging

P.S. I know there are so many areas of service that are vital --- from the absurdity of even having to consider closing a firehouse to cutting programs in schools and I know you will do the best you can.



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**City Council Budget Hearing  
Department for the Aging  
May 18, 2009**

**Testimony of The Partnership for the Homeless  
Piper Hoffman, Director of Advocacy**

The Partnership for the Homeless would like to thank City Council for convening this hearing about the executive budget for the Department for the Aging for fiscal year 2010. My name is Piper Hoffman and I am the Director of Advocacy at the Partnership for the Homeless, which has provided a range of services to homeless New Yorkers and battled the causes of homelessness for over 25 years.

Many older New Yorkers are homeless, and many more are at risk of becoming homeless. The Department of Homeless Services has eliminated the funding for Peter's Place, the Partnership for the Homeless's drop-in center for homeless seniors, which is the only resource center in New York City devoted solely to the needs of older homeless adults; as a result, Peter's Place will close by June 30<sup>th</sup>, leaving homeless seniors with nowhere to go. Rather than turning to facilities for the general homeless population, which are not equipped to serve the unique needs of homeless seniors and which many seniors avoid out of fear of being victimized, homeless seniors may turn to the already overwhelmed senior centers funded by DFTA.

The Department of Homeless Services also is not funding prevention programs to prevent precariously housed seniors from becoming homeless. This leaves a gaping hole in New York City's services, one that an increasing number of aged New Yorkers will fall through into homelessness. Nearly one-quarter of all senior-headed households in New York City now earn an annual income below \$10,000, and 80% of New York's seniors live solely on Social Security. People who have worked all their lives have lost their life savings in the financial collapse and can no longer pay their rents or mortgages.

Meanwhile there are few, if any, programs in the city that seek to prevent homelessness among older adults. Largely an amalgam of piecemeal efforts stitched together, the current systems do not adequately provide the support needed to enable aging, at-risk New Yorkers to "age in place" in their communities, and lack the specialized resources to serve the unique needs of impoverished seniors.

The lack of comprehensive prevention services is especially troubling. When seniors fall into homelessness, already fragile circumstances are exacerbated. Older adults who lose their homes:

- "age" disproportionately faster than their housed cohorts, experiencing health issues generally encountered in much older populations;
- become extremely frail and not able to undertake activities common to a person of their chronological age;

- over -

- are at a higher risk for memory loss, dementia, and decreasing physical wellness.

There is thus a substantial need for programs providing effective, holistic services designed to meet the needs of older adults that focus on preventing homelessness for those who are at-risk, and rapidly ending homelessness for those who are currently homeless, whether for the first time or long-term.

The Department for the Aging is well equipped to close this gap in accord with its mission to “help maintain the independence of older persons *in their communities*.” A successful homelessness prevention program for seniors would focus on helping seniors age in place, in their own homes. The Partnership for the Homeless is developing a plan for a model program to do just that.

Of course, we know that these are terrible economic times, but we believe, precisely because of these times, that there is a special need to provide for the most vulnerable New Yorkers. Today, more and more New York City seniors are finding it difficult to hold on to their homes and, consequently, are increasingly at risk for homelessness. Their numbers will only increase as our population ages, and they will increase even more if our economy continues to fail. Though money is hard to come by, we have a moral imperative to ensure that our seniors are able to have fulfilling and satisfying lives as they reach their older years. Therefore, we call on the City to provide funding for services targeting low-income seniors at risk of falling into homelessness and to support efforts to house those older adults who are already homeless.



## ***THE GERIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK***

**Testimony before a Joint Hearing of the New York City Council's Committee on Aging  
and the Committee on Finance**

David Weprin, Chair of the Finance Committee  
Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Chair of the Aging Committee  
Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chair of the Subcommittee on Senior Centers

**Hearing on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2010 Executive Budget**

**May 18, 2009**

Testimony by  
Kimberly A. Williams, LMSW  
Director

*A Project of the Mental Health Association of New York City*

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***Dedicated To Improving Geriatric Mental Health Practice and Policy***

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairs Weprin, Arroyo, Mark-Viverito, and distinguished members of the Council for the opportunity to testify today on the Mayor's Fiscal 2010 Executive Budget. My name is Kimberly Williams. I am Director of the Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York, a statewide advocacy and education organization with over 3,000 members that was formed in January 2004 to address the needs of older adults with mental disorders both now and in anticipation of the elderboom.

During this challenging economic time, government, at all levels, is forced to make difficult decisions about how to deal with loss of revenue. But cutting services to older adults, a population that will increase 50% over the next 20 years from 1 million to 1.5 million in NYC, is a terrible choice. If anything, we should be increasing funding for services that support older adults to age in their communities. We are greatly concerned about the Mayor's failure to recognize this growing need. Where is the preparation for the elder boom? Where is the recognition that there will be a growing need for care? Where is the effort to address the needs of family caregivers? Where is the vision to engage older New Yorkers as resources to meet current and future needs?

It is during a fiscal crisis that older adults who are poor and most in need are relying on a community safety net of support services to carry them through. Yet the Mayor proposes to cut vital services for older adults including senior centers, home delivered meals and elder abuse funds. These proposed cuts would have a devastating impact on the aging service infrastructure and its ability to provide critical supports to help older adults maintain a life of dignity in the community.

Senior centers provide a variety of essential support services that help to prevent mental illness and promote mental well-being among elders. Case management, a critical entry point into the long term care system, and home delivered meals reach isolated homebound seniors, many of whom have depression or anxiety disorders, and are <sup>losing</sup> losing their



independence in the community. Elder abuse services provide supports to an extremely vulnerable population, many of whom have co-morbid depression and/or anxiety.

These proposed cuts are on top of \$16.6 million in previous funding reductions including cuts to social adult day care, intergenerational programming, caregiver support, non-core services, and the congregate services initiative. As a result there are already gaps in critical supports for older adults and their caregivers. The aging system cannot sustain additional cuts.

It is now, during an economic crisis that these services are most needed. With drastic program cuts, older adults will be forced to turn to more expensive settings for services. We urge you to reject the proposed cuts and to preserve essential programs for older adults in NYC.

We also urge you to restore the \$2.4 million in funding for the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative. Because many older adults will not, or cannot, go to a mental health treatment setting, it is key to provide adequate mental health services in settings where older adults are located. This successful City Council initiative expands existing mental health services into community-based settings where older adults have trusting relationships and are comfortable seeking help.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with the City Council to ensure adequate supports to address the needs of older adults and their caregivers in NYC.

PUBLIC

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/18/09

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Name: Piper Hoffman

Address: 305 7th Ave, 13th Fl, NYC 10001

I represent: The Partnership for the Homeless

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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I represent: BP JAMES P. MOLINARO

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Name: George Geller

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I represent: Teamsters local 237

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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