



Testimony before the New York City Council Aging and Finance Committees

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Hearing on the Mayor’s Fiscal Year 2012 Preliminary Budget

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INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon Chairs Recchia, Lappin, Greenfield 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), Citymeals-on-Wheels and the Human Services Council (HSC). Together we represent hundreds of agencies providing social services to New Yorkers in all five boroughs and are participants in the Human Service Council’s “Who Cares? I Do.” Grassroots campaign that is supported by individuals, organizations, businesses, policy makers, philanthropists, and many others who recognize how critical human services are, wanting to protect the well-being of real people in our communities.

We are testifying today to share our concerns over the loss of over \$41 million in the Mayor’s FY 2012 Preliminary Budget; this includes the loss of \$34.7 million City Council Initiatives in DFTA and DOHMH as well as a FY2012 \$6.6 million PEG to Case Management. We are also gravely concerned about the potential loss of \$25 million to the Department for the Aging as a result of the Governor’s Executive Budget cut to Title XX Social Services Block Grant funding.

The number of adults aged 65 and over is projected to rise 44 percent, from 938,000 in 2000 to 1.35 million in 2030¹ as a result of two distinct trends: the post World War II baby boom that occurred between 1946 and 1964 and the improvements in life expectancy. Following the boom, the fertility rates declined in New York and nationally and consequentially we are seeing and will continue to see the percentage of older adults (in comparison to the rest of the society) increase. In 2000, about one in every 9 people was 65 or older, by 2030 one out of every 7 people will be aged 65 or older.

Not only is the population of older adults growing, it is also estimated that 43% of those 65 or older had some form of disability². Compounding this, based on the cost of living in New York City, it is estimated that almost one in three seniors (32%) is living in poverty.³ Moreover, the longstanding program many of these poor seniors rely on for healthcare, Medicaid, is proposed to be cut by \$2.3 billion in the Governor’s Executive Budget. It seems

¹ Found on page 7, http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/census/projections_briefing_booklet.pdf

² <http://www.nyam.org/initiatives/docs/AgeFriendly.pdf>

³ <http://www.nyam.org/initiatives/docs/AgeFriendly.pdf>

inevitable that many of these frail seniors will be losing services like personal care and housekeeping - making non-medical preventive services like those offered by DFTA providers even more crucial to their livelihood and independence.

The trifecta of trends (aging population, disability rates, and poverty) warrants a strong and healthy social service delivery system in New York City- one that is adequately funded and responsive to the changing needs of this population. So although we recognize the fragile financial situation the city is currently in- particularly in relation to the State's financial quandary, it is important to fight any cuts to community based social services for low income older adults- as they are in opposition to supporting New Yorker's to age in place.

We deeply appreciate the long-standing commitment of the City Council for being a champion for seniors- restoring critical programs that make a difference in the lives of older adults.

FUNDING PRIORITIES IN THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET

The City Council has historically been a staunch supporter of community-based senior services. We are grateful for the restorations made each year by City Council, \$34.6 million in FY 2011, to critical senior services through DFTA and DOHMH. It is important to note that this body is now responsible for funding one out of every four city tax levy dollars in DFTA's budget (about 23%). Given the growing population of older adults in NYC and the uncertainty of this funding, we must continue to work together to prevent devastating services cuts and seek to baseline infrastructure funds for community based agencies.

Restore \$19.145 million for Senior Centers

Senior centers, which offer socialization opportunities, health and wellness programming, nutritious meals, and other enrichment activities, provide a safe place for older adults to go. Centers help seniors who otherwise might become isolated stay healthy, active, and engaged. Mayor's FY2012 Preliminary Budget does not include \$19.145 million in funding to support the City's network of senior centers. This funding supports a combination of programs- original City Council Initiatives (like supplementing food costs) and prior year PEG's that the Council restored each year.

The infrastructure of senior centers has been significantly weakened by the onslaught of seemingly merciless budget cuts in recent years. Most prominently, the City placed 51 centers on a list for closure to meet a FY2011 PEG target of \$4.2 million. Of those 51 centers, 6 were restored and removed from the list based on new information received by DFTA and 45 senior center contracts were ended on June 30, 2010. In a victorious effort by the City Council, funding to 17 of those centers was restored with discretionary funding. It is important to note that some (but not all) of the centers have had challenges maintaining operations due to the delay in receiving funding; providers have had to operate for months before a single dollar from their award was received.

While not as visible as the loss of whole senior centers, just over \$1 million was lost last year in three discrete areas of operational support to senior centers - Space Costs, Transportation, and Raw food costs. The following City Council Initiatives were not included in the FY2012 Preliminary Budget:

\$5M: Senior Centers—PEG Restoration

In January 2009, the FY10 Preliminary Budget contained a senior center PEG of \$5 million. The Council restored this PEG in the FY10 and FY11 adopted budgets. The elimination of this funding will significantly weaken the existing network of performing centers.

\$4.5M: Senior Centers- Home Delivered Meals Deficit Restoration

When the home delivered meals program was restructured in 2008-9, senior centers that had and then lost home delivered meals contracts experienced destabilization of funding. Most of those centers used the same kitchens and staff to run both programs; when the contracts were lost, so was funding for

equipment and cooks. The City Council acknowledged the need to stabilize these centers and allocated \$4.5 million in FY10 and FY11 so that senior center kitchens can continue to fully operate.

\$4.5M: Food Costs for Senior Centers & Meals on Wheels

Recognizing the need to help senior meal programs offset increasing costs for fresh, nutritious food, the Council allocated \$4.55 million in “Raw Food Costs” in the FY08 and FY09 Adopted Budgets. In FY11, that amount was partially restored at \$4.5 million.

\$2M: Transportation Operating Costs

This initiative’s funding was partially restored in the FY11 Adopted Budget. This funding covers the operating costs (insurance, fuel, and maintenance) of vans and other vehicles used by senior centers to meet participants’ transportation needs, such as rides to and from senior centers, medical appointments, and grocery stores. Some of the funding is used to support home delivered meals programs.

\$1.5M: Space Costs for Senior Centers

This was partially restored in the FY11 Adopted Budget. This funding supports rent, space, and maintenance costs associated with some of the 256 senior centers throughout the five boroughs.

\$1.645M: Senior Center Closures- PEG Restoration

51 senior centers were targeted for closure in a \$4.2 million FY12 PEG; of the 51, 45 senior center contracts were ended by DFTA on June 30, 2010. Based on new information, 6 senior centers were taken off the list of 51 and baselined. The City Council restored \$1.645 million to prevent 17 of the 45 senior centers from closing.

Restore \$12.5 million for Life-Sustaining Supportive Senior Services

Restore \$6.6 Million Case Management Restructuring

In the November 2010 Plan, the Mayor proposed a mid-year PEG which would have resulted in a \$3.3 million cut to case management in FY2011 budget. This cut was fully restored in January 2011 and the restoration is documented in the FY2012 Preliminary Budget. We would like to thank Speaker Christine Quinn and Aging Chair Jessica Lappin for making full restoration for case management a priority in the November Plan of 2010. We are, of course, disappointed that the preliminary budget includes the cut again, and look forward towards ensuring this critical program is restored.

The proposed cut will drastically reduce the City’s ability to meet the needs of its most frail older adults. Based on input from current case management providers, the impact of the cut will likely be the layoff of over 100 highly trained social workers, resulting in over 8,000 seniors either receiving compromised, lower quality services or no services at all. This service is highly valued and much needed- nearly 900 older adults were on a waiting list to receive case management in December 2010.

Case management is anything a case manager does to help a homebound, physically disabled and/or mentally impaired, older adult remain safely living in their own home; i.e. case management helps New York’s most vulnerable, most frail elders manage their day to day lives. Case management involves an in-depth assessment of a senior’s resources, preferences and needs followed by individualized care planning, coordination, and ongoing monitoring of a person’s well being. Case managers provide access to the City’s meals on wheels program and subsidized home care as well as advocacy and linkages to other state and federal public benefits, services and local volunteer programs. The work of case managers is preventative as it combats elder abuse, be it physical, mental or financial, and it is also key to preventing evictions. Although the seniors eligible for case management are not yet in poverty, they are often near poor; one facet of the case management program is that it helps the

senior plan for current and future expenses related to growing old. Below is a real example of value of the case management program.

Ms. T. is a 78 y/o old divorced woman residing with her son as a tenant in a private home with an absentee landlord. She has no electricity, heat or hot water. During the case manager's comprehensive in-home assessment, he found her son smoking crack cocaine. Ms. T. suffers with extreme painful osteoporosis in her back and arthritis in her legs. This combination limits her ability to perform housework, shop, prepare meals and personal care tasks. Her home is in major disrepair posing health and safety threats from leaking walls, cracked floors, vermin and roaches. Ms. T. spends most of her time lying on an old torn couch. She acknowledges feeling sad. Her main source of nutrition is snacks. The case manager immediately provided emergency meals-on-wheels and referred the client to Adult Protective Services. Since the Case Manager recognized other significant unmet needs, he pursued additional case management activities and discovered the client has Section 8 housing. Therefore, he used his case management skills to expedite relocating Mrs. T. to emergency Section 8 housing given her dangerous living conditions. She did not have moving expenses and through his case management efforts, obtained funds from HRA. Mrs. T. no longer resides in substandard housing, has a rent she can afford and is safe. She will receive case management services to ensure she remains stable in her home and community. According to Mrs. T. she stated her sadness lifted and feels she has a professional case manager upon whom she can rely for future case management assistance. Case Management Hours: 11; Cost of Case Management: \$451.11

Restore \$800,000 for Elder Abuse Prevention Services

We thank the City Council for working with DFTA to restore Elder Abuse funding last year; however, we are still keenly aware that this funding stream is not secure considering the challenging economic times. The need to prevent elder abuse in its many forms is greater than ever. The City Council funding provides critical financial resources for a coalition of social service providers to work with the District Attorney and other legal offices, DFTA, as well as other government agencies to help prevent and treat elders who are the victims of psychological, financial and physical abuse. Elder abuse providers offer clinical social work counseling, case management, support groups; legal assistance in Family and Criminal Courts; secure emergency funds and acquire locks, gates and alarms for clients as needed; apply for benefits and entitlements; conduct trainings and outreach programs to educate community groups to identify and respond to potential signs of elder abuse. One heartbreaking example of why this funding is critical involves an elder abuse client I will call Mr. B. His story below:

Mr. B, an 80-year-old man has been friends with a 46-year-old woman for three years. She told him her landlord was harassing her and she needed money to fight an eviction, so he lent her \$38K. She still lost her apartment so Mr. B still let her move in with him even though he knew her apartment was in shambles due to hoarding. Soon his apartment was cluttered with debris, vermin-infested, and his landlord wanted him evicted. When Mr. B asked her to leave she threatened to kill him. She is verbally abusive, bullies him for money, pays no rent, and never paid him back the first lending. Mr. B was both feared and felt sorry for his roommate. With individual counseling and a peer support group for elder abuse survivors, Mr. B gathered the strength to reclaim his apartment. Elder abuse (EA) staff found him a housing attorney and will testify on his behalf in housing court. EA also referred Mr. B to Adult Protective Services, to seek guardianship if efforts to evict the abuser fail. While his court case is pending, Mr. B continues to get counseling so he can withstand the daily emotional abuse of his roommate.

Without this vital funding, elder abuse providers might cease to exist and many vulnerable elders **such as Mr. B** would have nowhere to turn. With approximately 1000 older persons seen annually by the DFTA Elder Abuse provider network, we request the City continue funding Elder Abuse programs in the amount of \$800,000.

Restore \$1.2 million for Information and Referral (Extended Services)

Extended Services, which includes information and referral services and case assistance, has been serving seniors for over 35 years and the \$1.2 million FY11 City Council funding is supporting 8 community-based programs that will provide more than 120,000 information and referral contacts and approximately 18,000 hours of case assistance this fiscal year. Oftentimes these services are the front line for individuals unsure how or unable to access services on their own. Services are provided by culturally competent case workers in local communities citywide and are available in several languages. Clients are enrolled in programs, services and entitlement programs that can help assist them with range of needs, from preventing seniors with dementia from being evicted from their home of 40 years to helping underserved seniors enroll in Medicaid to providing emergency cash assistance for food and clothing. This comprehensive type of case and referral assistance provides a level of service that does not exist elsewhere, and is more cost effective than full-blown case management, which will either not accept these disadvantaged clients or spend unnecessary resources when less is needed.

Restore \$900,000 for Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) SSP

This funding was partially restored by the City Council in the FY11 Adopted Budget. The funding supports 10 NORC programs that were not funded through the DFTA's NORC RFP process in July 2006 (FY07). NORC programs afford seniors the opportunity to remain in their own home and in the community they are most familiar with, as they provide building/development based social and medical services, educational & recreational activities, and volunteer opportunities. NORC's promote healthy aging, independence, and community-building.

Restore \$1 million Citymeals

Citymeals-on-Wheels is requesting a restoration grant in the amount of \$1 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012. This funding will be used to bring meals right to the doors of our oldest neighbors on Saturdays and Sundays and holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving. In addition to feeding our elderly, as an added benefit, Citymeals generates revenue for New York City through the federal government's cash in lieu of commodities program which reimburses DFTA approximately 61 cents for every meal underwritten by Citymeals. All of this money goes toward the city-funded weekday meals program, bringing in nearly \$1.3 million and an additional 175,000 home delivered meals to those who need it.

Citymeals-on-Wheels raises private funds to ensure no homebound elderly New Yorker will ever go a day without food or human company. Last year, our family of contributors helped us bring over 2 million nutritious meals to 16,232 frail aged in every borough of New York City. In addition, over 1,500 volunteers collectively spent 62,000 hours visiting and delivering meals to New York's frail aged. Citymeals funds 30 community-based agencies that bring weekend, holiday and emergency meals to homebound elderly New Yorkers who can no longer shop or cook for themselves. Gael Greene and James Beard founded Citymeals-on-Wheels in 1981 after reading a newspaper article about homebound elderly New Yorkers with nothing to eat on weekends and holidays. They rallied their friends in the restaurant community raising private funds as a supplement to the government-funded weekday meal delivery program. Twenty-nine years ago their first efforts brought a Christmas meal to 6,000 frail aged.

Restore \$2.0 million for the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative

This funding was partially restored by the City Council in the FY11 Adopted Budget and not included in the FY12 Preliminary Budget, strengthens the infrastructure and enhances the capacity of 25 providers to deliver mental health care to older adults in non-traditional settings, such as seniors' homes, senior centers, and homeless shelters, thereby decreasing the stigma associated with seeking the services out in the community. This funding is administered by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Social Adult Day Services (SADS)

We were very pleased and appreciative that the City Council's Committee on Aging, Subcommittee on Senior Centers and the Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disabilities held a recent hearing on Social Adult Day Services (SADS). SADS are integral to the aging service delivery system and it is very unfortunate that funding for this vital program was eliminated in the FY'11 budget. Social adult day services provide therapeutic programming that helps seniors maintain their everyday functioning and are also an

important source of respite and support for caregivers. As was stated in the recent hearing, SADS are a far more cost-effective way to care for frail elders than nursing homes. Community-based programs such as social adult day care cost far less than nursing home placements and create a “win-win” situation for seniors and for government. While accessing community-based services and supports the senior is able to stay in the comfort of their own home and community for as long as possible, averting premature nursing home placement. Government in turn, spends far less on community-based services than nursing homes. A report by the New York State Department of Health entitled “Estimated Average of New York State Nursing Home Rates” as well as program data obtained from Riverstone Senior Life Services, an operator of a social adult day program, notes that the cost of a year in a New York City nursing home is \$123,420 compared to the cost of a year in a social adult day care program which is \$18,500. We understand the serious budget constraints, but felt it was important to include this statement about the importance of SADS in the hopes that funds at some point in the future could be restored.

Restore \$9.6 million for Vital Discretionary Funding Sources

The City Council has historically set aside two pots of discretionary funding related to aging services. First, each Council Member receives just over \$108,000 to allocate to organizations serving older adults in their communities. The second discretionary pot of funding is for Borough Presidents’ to allocate to organizations serving older adults. We urge that the City Council restore this funding in the FY12 Adopted Budget.

Restore \$4.1 million for Senior Services--Borough Presidents’ Discretionary Funding PEG Restoration

This funding, partially restored by the City Council in FY11 Adopted Budget and not included in the FY12 Preliminary Budget, supports educational and recreation opportunities for New York’s older adult population in each of the five boroughs. Many long standing senior programs- like non-traditional senior centers- depend on this discretionary funding to maintain operations.

Restore \$5.5million for City Council Aging Discretionary Funding

The discretionary funding provides critical support to senior centers and supportive services in the City’s 51 Council districts. Examples of funding included: financial counselors at senior centers, Kosher and other cultural meals, Arts programs, intergenerational projects, respite services for caregivers, homelessness and eviction prevention services. It often supports operational costs not covered in traditional contracts.

STATE BUDGET IMPACT ON CITY-BASED SENIOR SERVICES

We are very grateful for the City Council’s relentless support in advocating for restoration of Local Discretionary funding in the Title XX Social Services Block Grant. The advocacy efforts seem to be fruitful; it appears that both the Senate and Assembly have prioritized the restoration of the Title XX Social Services Block Grant. While this is hopeful news, the final budget has yet to be decided.

The Governor’s proposal to change how the Title XX Social Services Block Grant would prohibit the City from using \$25 million to fund senior centers. At the moment, New York City receives about \$65 million of the available \$102 million in federal funds from the NY State Office of Children and Family Services; \$40 million of this is mandated to be used in Adult Protective Services and Domestic Violence Programming. The remaining \$25 is available for use at NYC’s discretion within broad guidelines. The Governor’s budget eliminates discretionary use of this funding and requires it all to be used for mandated child welfare services. As you know, the impact would be devastating; 105 senior centers could close if this were to happen.

CONCLUSION

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of funding restorations on behalf of the providers we represent and the seniors they serve. Despite our desire and need to expand our programs and

innovate, we recognize that it is not a time of growth given the financial climate- and therefore have not asked for anything above or beyond FY2011 Adopted Budget funding levels. We in return ask the City Council to recognize the need for our providers to have stable, reliable funding for this upcoming fiscal year. 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.

Citymeals-On-Wheels

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Council of Senior Centers and Services

CSCS is the central organization in NYC representing community-based services for the elderly. CSCS membership is comprised of 150 sponsors operating hundreds of neighborhood based programs serving 300,000 older New Yorkers. CSCS' members provide services including multi-service senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, health and wellness programs, case management, home care, transportation, NORCs, adult day, elder abuse and a gamut of other community-based services.

Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

FPWA is a membership organization with almost 300 community-based social service agencies and church-based human service programs in its network. FPWA strengthens its members through management and technical assistance; training and workshops; policy and advocacy services; and through a variety of grant programs, including camp scholarships, a holiday toy drive, and individual grants for emergency needs through its participation in the New York Times Neediest Cases fund. Among FPWA's membership are 55 agencies that provide services to the elderly throughout New York City.

Human Services Council

The Human Services Council of New York City (HSC) is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for a network of over 160 not-for-profit human service federations, coalitions, advocacy groups, and direct service providers throughout New York City. As the coordinating body, HSC mobilizes these diverse groups to educate policy makers and the community on how budget and policy decisions affect New York City's social service providers and the poor and vulnerable individuals and families who depend on them for services.

UJA Federation of New York

UJA-Federation's mission is "caring for those in need, rescuing those in harm's way, and renewing and strengthening the Jewish people in New York, in Israel, and around the world." We are a funding and coordinating body for more than 100 nonprofit health and human service and educational agencies in New York City, many of which are dedicated to serving the elderly.

United Neighborhood Houses

UNH is the 90 year old membership organization of New York City's settlement houses and community centers. Our 38 member agencies, working at over 400 sites with close to 10,000 staff members and 7,500 volunteers, comprise one of the largest human service systems in the city and provide high quality programs and services to over half a million New Yorkers each year. These diverse programs and services include, but are not limited to: child care, after school and youth development programs, English and adult literacy classes, job training, immigrant legal services, eviction prevention programs, and a variety of congregate and in-home services for older adults. UNH supports its members through policy development, advocacy, and capacity-building activities.