

TAKE ACTION NOW

The Governor has declared a fiscal emergency to address a mounting state budget deficit in the current year and FY 2009-10. **Senate Budget Subcommittees will begin public hearings on Wednesday, December 10 to consider proposed cuts and revenue increases (see next page).**

The Governor's September cuts have already hobbled oversight and protection for vulnerable elderly (Adult Protective Services, Ombudsman) while crippling programs that manage chronic care and enable people with few resources to remain stable (Multi-Purpose Senior Support Services, Medicare Part B premium coverage, Adult Day Health Care, Nutrition programs, Senior Employment, and Senior Citizens' Tax Assistance). If new proposals go through, hundreds of thousands of elderly will lose essential services.

Committee Chairs and the Senate leadership must hear from providers, seniors, family members, and the community about how important it is to protect services for vulnerable seniors.

- **Fax letters** to the following legislators' Sacramento offices.
- **Or... Call their offices.** Identify yourself and mention the programs that you are asking to protect, let them know how the proposed cuts would affect the people you serve.

Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee

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About the Governor's Proposed Cuts

When the Governor signed the budget on September 23, he made \$510 million in last-minute line item veto cuts to safety-net services for seniors, children, families and people with disabilities – cuts that are already devastating programs and lives. Now, with a proposal that is “half and half” spending cuts and revenue increases, the Governor has targeted the foundations of the safety net.

The following summarizes the impact of the Governor's proposals on seniors in Alameda County.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI/SSP)

The Governor proposes to cut SSI/SSP to the “maintenance of effort” levels of 1983. Payments to individual recipients would drop by around \$77 a month.

California's Supplemental Security Income/ State Supplementary Program recipients are 69% disabled, 2% blind and 29% aged. More than 53,000 seniors and people with disabilities in Alameda County survive on SSI/SSP income.

Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)

The Governor proposes to eliminate the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI). CAPI is the state-funded assistance to elderly and disabled legal immigrants who are not eligible for SSI/SSP.

Medi-Cal Optional Benefits

The Governor proposes to eliminate Medi-Cal Optional Benefits. Optional benefits include dental benefits, acupuncture, audiology, optometry, optical, chiropractic, podiatry, psychology, speech therapy, and incontinence creams/washes – essential services for people managing chronic diseases. Statewide, over 3 million people rely on one or more optional benefits.

Medi-Cal Coverage for Aged, Blind and Disabled

The Governor proposes to eliminate full-scope Medi-Cal for recipients in the “Aged, Blind and Disabled” category whose incomes are above SSI/SSP level. This category was originally called “133% Medi-Cal” when it was implemented in 2001, because it enables a categorically eligible person¹ whose asset level qualifies for Medi-Cal,² but whose income is “too high”,³ to receive full-scope Medi-Cal. Without full-scope Medi-Cal, these individuals will have a monthly deductible, or “Share-Of-Cost”. That is, they will have to incur medical expenses in an amount that exceeds their share-of-cost before Medi-Cal will cover their healthcare in any given month.

A significant number of Alameda County's approximately 39,000 seniors who rely on Medi-Cal coverage would be affected by this change. Without coverage for their health care or

¹ One who is aged, blind or a person with disabilities.

² \$2,000 for an individual, \$3,000 for a couple.

³ For ABD, total countable income (minus a maintenance needs allowance and health, dental or vision insurance premiums) must be less than 133% of federal poverty level: less than \$1,081 (through 3/31/2009) for an individual, less than \$1,502 for a couple (through 9/30/2008).

alternative resources, these seniors would be unable to afford preventive healthcare and treatment for chronic conditions.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

The Governor proposes three cuts to this program that serves over 15,000 vulnerable children, adults and seniors in Alameda County. He proposes to:

- Reduce the State's contribution to IHSS worker wages, effectively reducing hourly pay to an average of about \$9/hr plus \$0.60 in benefits.⁴ This would affect 11,000 dedicated IHSS workers in Alameda County.
- Eliminate the IHSS buy out of the share of cost for IHSS recipients with a functional index of less than 4. There are currently 8,600 in this buy out program statewide. Approximately 1,500 recipients would continue. Approximately 7,100 would have to pay an average of \$427.00 per month.
- Eliminate domestic and related services for recipients with functional indexes below 4. More than 90% of IHSS recipients receive domestic services. This cut would affect 83,123 people statewide. Their services would be reduced by an average of 21.6 hours per month.

IHSS recipients, by definition, cannot just “get by” without help. Reducing services, cutting worker wages and increasing out of pocket costs will put them at increased risk of hospitalization or institutionalization at tremendous cost to taxpayers.

⁴ The state currently contributes 35% of IHSS worker wages based on a wage of \$11.50/hr. Under the Governor's proposal, the state contribution would be based on a wage of \$8/hr.