



Senior Strong

Special Edition

Public Policy & Action News for Today's Recreation/Activity Professional

What the United States Administrative Offices' 2019 Budget Requests Means for Today's Seniors

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The following data and information was gathered and received from a national webinar hosted by the National Council on Aging dated 21 February 2018.

During the month of February 2018, our Administration released its 2019 budget requests outlining future funding priorities. The following list includes proposals that would directly and adversely affect today's seniors:

- Medicare: Cut by \$237 billion
- Medicaid: Cut by \$1 trillion
- Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income: Cut by \$72 billion
- Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program: Eliminated
- Senior Community Service Employment Program: Eliminated
- Falls Prevention: Eliminated
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Education: Eliminated
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program: Eliminated
- Block Grants: Eliminated
- National Service Programs: Eliminated
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program: Eliminated
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Cut by \$213 billion
- Elder Justice Act: Cut by \$2 million



So, how does all of this impact the Recreation/Activity Professional?

Medicaid

Nearly 7 million seniors rely solely on Medicaid for their health and long-term care. If this proposal item passes, there would be significant impacts; i.e., funding, staffing, etc., on the Recreation/Activity Department. Specifically, Quality of Life programming, special events and other services provided by our fellow team members would stand in jeopardy.

Falls Prevention

This budget proposal item calls for the elimination of \$5 million in falls prevention funding. Statistics and data from hospitals and all types of senior healthcare communities clearly show that a senior adult dies from a fall every 19 minutes. Furthermore, every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall-related injury.

Chronic Disease Self-Management Education

Many Recreation/Activity Professionals lead Quality of Life healthcare community-based workshops for seniors living with chronic conditions. This proposal would eliminate funding for these needed educational services.

Block Grants

An estimated 4.4 million older adults receive services under the Social Services Block Grant and the Community Development Block Grant (SSBG, CDBG). These programs provide individual states and localities funding to improve economic security and independence for seniors through services such as home care, home-delivered meals and transportation. There has been a significant increase with regards to Recreation/Activity Professionals working in the home-health arena.

National Service Programs

This proposed budget item would eliminate the Corporation for National and Community Service, and with it, the Senior Corps, VISTA, and AmeriCorps programs that enlist older adults in volunteerism. Many Recreation/Activity Departments thrive and depend on seniors who serve daily in their healthcare communities. In 2016, Senior Corps reported 245,000 volunteers who provided a total of 74.6 million hours of volunteer service; amazing!

Elder Justice Act

This budget will cut funding for Adult Protective Services and Elder Justice Initiative at the Administration for Community Living. It is projected that 5 million seniors are



abused each year, and the annual loss by victims of financial exploitation is estimated to be at least \$36.5 billion.

We as Recreation/Activity Professionals, must keep ourselves informed, updated and knowledgeable with all aspects of local, state and federal healthcare policies and procedures. Any proposed legislation should be discussed in our Interdisciplinary Team meetings and shared with residents and families during Resident Council and Family Forums. Taking a proactive approach and stand is always the right way to better serve and provide the highest quality services to our residents.

Search the following websites, blogs and headers for more information:

Medicare

Medicaid

Federal Budget

SCSEP

Aging Mastery Program

National Institute of Senior Centers

Healthy Aging

Public Policy & Action