



April 25, 2014

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Kingston  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor-HHS-Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor-HHS-Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Kingston and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro:

As you develop the FY 2015 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to support Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs, like Meals on Wheels, by funding them at their FY 2010 level of \$819 million. We make this modest request knowing that providing proper nutrition to vulnerable seniors improves quality of life, promotes better health outcomes, and saves significant taxpayer dollars. Morally, investing in these programs is the right thing to do. Practically, it is good economics.

Earlier this year, this same Committee decided to restore \$46 million in funding for FY 2014 over the harmful FY 2013 sequestration cuts. We are grateful for your efforts and remain hopeful that again you will decide to invest in these programs because of their obvious moral and fiscal benefits.

The nutritious meals, friendly visits, socialization and safety checks provided by our members' volunteers and staff enable more than 2.5 million seniors to remain healthier and independent in their own homes and communities. Congregate and home-delivered meal programs, which are supported through OAA funding, prevent taxpayers from having to pay for costlier care options. This includes nursing homes and hospitals, which are often paid for through Medicare and Medicaid. A recent study by the Center for Effective Government showed that for every \$1 invested in Meals on Wheels, there is up to \$50 in savings for the Medicaid program alone.

On top of the social and economic cases for investing in OAA Nutrition Programs, the public overwhelmingly supports them. In fact, an October 2013 survey found that 7 in 10 Americans agree the government should pay for Meals on Wheels. The exponentially growing problem of senior hunger in America requires the continued public-private partnerships that have been

effectively leveraged to date. However, the federal government must serve as our strongest and most reliable fiscal partner by elevating its support to higher levels that keep pace with inflation and a rapidly aging population. The infrastructure and network exists to serve more of our seniors in need, but the financial resources fall substantially short.

In 2011, a Government Accountability Office report showed that nationally, we are merely scratching the surface on meeting the needs of an exponentially increasing hungry senior population. The report found that an estimated 90 percent of low-income older adults who were food insecure did not receive any meal services through the OAA, but likely needed them. This reality has only worsened due to sequestration, from which programs are still recovering, and year-after-year flat funding that doesn't account for rising costs and need.

We understand the difficult decisions you and your colleagues are tasked with in FY 2015 and beyond. However, the evidence demonstrates that these programs are not only saving lives and taxpayer dollars every day, but they are effectively reaching our nation's most vulnerable seniors and have the capacity to serve more if properly resourced. In short, these proven and effective programs are a part of the solution to our nation's fiscal challenges and should be looked to as such.

As your Committee and Subcommittee craft and consider the FY 2015 appropriations bill(s), we ask that you provide FY 2010 appropriations levels for all three nutrition programs authorized under the OAA – Congregate Nutrition Program, Home-Delivered Nutrition Program, and the Nutrition Services Incentive Program. You have the ability to shorten waiting lists and increase the number of nutritious meals we can serve to seniors today. At the same time you will be investing in a stronger fiscal path for our country by reducing future health care costs.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues throughout the FY 2015 appropriations process.

Sincerely,



Paul Downey  
President  
National Association of Nutrition and  
Aging Services Programs (NANASP)



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Chair  
Meals On Wheels Association of America



Robert B. Blancato  
Executive Director  
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Ellie Hollander  
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