



PRESS RELEASE

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It's Still Not Too Late

COLUMBUS -- The Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Public Children Services Association of Ohio and the member organizations of Advocates for Ohio's Future call on Leadership, Conferees and members of both the House and Senate to insist on funding for Child and Adult Protective Services before passing a Conference Report. The members of the General Assembly have been considering the 2016-17 Biennial Budget since the Kasich Administration introduced its budget in February 2015. Each Chamber and the Administration have addressed a number of issues, however, as they finish their work in Conference Committee, they have one last chance to address the two issues at either end of life's continuum: **protecting abused and neglected children and youth** through providing additional funding for the State Child Protection Subsidy and **protecting seniors from abuse and neglect** by providing additional funding for the Adult Protective Services Program.

Health and human services have not recovered from the recession. Basic aid to people in need has suffered from severe budget cuts. We are calling on members of Ohio's General Assembly to use a portion of the funding presented by the increased revenue estimates to bolster protections for Ohio's children and seniors.

If policymakers are serious about not leaving any people behind who need help in our state, they must address these two populations in a time when there are resources. These two programs serve over 13,000 abused and neglected children in custody. Well over 14,000 cases of elder abuse have been reported in our state. Many have ceased reporting because they know there are not adequate staff to respond.

"The opiate epidemic in Ohio has resulted in an increase of children coming into custody of child protection agencies in every county of our state. A preponderance of these children are the ages of 0-5 and need very special treatment to address the symptoms they have after experiencing trauma and abuse in their own homes," said Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, Director of Policy and Government Relations for PCSAO.

Larke Recchie, CEO for the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging went on to say, "Opiates can potentially contribute to elder abuse. Adult Protective Services are not available on a consistent basis due to lack of resources. Our elders are at risk, and need somewhere to turn. Without additional investment in Adult Protective Services, where you live will determine whether and how much help you can get."

"From day one these two associations as well as the member organizations of Advocates for Ohio's Future have supported requests for funding for these programs. It is critical to make certain we are supporting and protecting Ohio's children and seniors. These very special cases must be addressed with additional resources in the 2016-17 Biennial Budget. **It is never too late to do the right thing,**" said Bill Sundermeyer, Advocates for Ohio's Future State Director.