



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

250 Broadway, Suite 1882
New York, NY 10007

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

MARCH 13, 2017

Contact: Paul Leonard [CM Chin] (212) 788-7259, pleonard@council.nyc.gov

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN TOUTS EFFORT TO MAKE 2017 THE ‘YEAR OF THE SENIOR’ Joins elderly New Yorkers in their demand for a stronger social safety net to counter Trump

CITY HALL – With fears that President Trump’s campaign promises to cut social service spending will quickly come to fruition, **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**, chair of the Council’s Committee on Aging, led a revitalized push for additional funding to adequately address the growing waiting lists for services, senior centers in disrepair, and lack of a community-based safety net for elder New Yorkers.

“It is time that our City fully acknowledges the increased need of its fastest growing population – one that overwhelmingly includes those most at risk from the backward-facing policies of the Trump Administration. In this uncertain moment in our nation’s history, these seniors, including immigrants and women, must be able to count on their local government to support them in their desire to grow old with dignity in the City they helped build,” said **Council Member Chin**. “In terms of the overall budget, what we are asking from our City might seem small. But for our seniors, these badly needed funds to eliminate waitlists, fix senior centers and end elder abuse will make a world of difference.”



Council Member Chin led a chorus of voices from seniors and aging advocates on the steps of City Hall today before the first public hearing on the City’s Aging budget. That proposed \$306.4 million budget includes only \$4.3 million out of a requested \$60 million in additional funding for core senior services, as well as for other programs that provide home-delivered meals, transportation and social adult daycare for elder New Yorkers.

The \$4.3 million is for homecare services; however, even that amount is not adequate to completely eliminate the waitlist for this important service for older adults who are not eligible for Medicaid.

“Year after year we continue to be faced with stagnant and insufficient funding for the Department for the Aging that ultimately needs to be supplemented by the City Council. The Administration must

make a real commitment that reflects the needs of the rapidly growing senior population,” said **Council Member Paul Vallone, Chair of the Subcommittee on Senior Centers**. “Funding from the City Council should be going towards new initiatives and technologies for seniors, not towards the core services that the Administration should be baselining. It’s time to stop talking and start taking real action for our seniors.”

Bobbie Sackman, Associate Executive Director of Public Policy, LiveOn NY, states, “Aging is an equality issue. Aging is a woman’s issue. Aging is an immigrant issue. Aging is an affordable housing issue. Aging is a hunger and nutrition issue. Aging is building a peer community at senior centers and adult day programs. Aging is confronting elder abuse. Aging is receiving case management, home care and meals-on-wheels in your home. Aging is supporting women caregivers – family, the community-based aging workforce, and homecare workers. Aging is a time of great momentum as older New Yorkers anchor their families and communities. There is an ageist war on old women and men in Washington. It is up to New York City to act more responsibly than Washington and fully fund the \$60.6 million budget platform to provide a social safety net for older New Yorkers and family caregivers, one that is now thin. In this Year of the Senior, it is time to stand up for seniors.”

“Given the uncertain future for many vital programs that support older adults, New York City must commit to supporting its older residents through stable, baselined funding. Services such as senior centers, NORCs, home delivered meals, and case management allows older adults to live with dignity in their communities. We urge the City to invest in senior services to prevent waitlists and keep older adults safe and healthy,” said **Susan Stamler, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses (UNH)**.

“As New Yorkers are living longer than ever before, the need for services that enable older adults to age in place is critical. Given the already unstable and inadequate funding for aging services, any cuts in federal funding that supports the City’s community-based safety net programs would be particularly devastating for older adults, thousands of whom are already on waitlists for services. We urge the City to invest \$60.6 million in aging services to ensure that older New Yorkers can remain safe, healthy, and connected in their communities,” said **Jeanette Estima, Policy Analyst, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA)**.

There are 1.4 million adults aged 60 and over in New York City, totaling more than 17 percent of the City’s residents. By 2010, the number of seniors will grow by nearly 50 percent and comprise 20 percent of the City’s total population.

By contrast, the NYC Department for the Aging’s Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget has decreased by \$24.4 million or 8.4 percent compared to last year’s Adopted Budget. The majority of the decrease can be attributed to the absence of one-time Council funding for senior services totaling \$30 million, or 9 percent of the agency’s overall budget. Over the last three years, Council Member Chin has urged the Administration to baseline this Council funding, rather than relying on one-time allocations to fill the gap.

In addition to baselining funding for core services, the \$60 million in additional funding requested by Council Member Chin would significantly strengthen the social safety net for older adults by adequately supporting current programs to help upgrade senior centers, to expand support and respite services for a growing number of caregivers, and to provide mental health counseling for elder abuse victims.

###