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MAY 24, 2016

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN, ADVOCATES AND SENIORS CALL ON MAYOR DE BLASIO TO MAKE FUNDING FOR NYC'S ELDERLY A TOP PRIORITY

Funding for elderly New Yorkers still a tiny fraction of overall budget – despite fact that seniors are the fast growing population group in the City

New York, NY—Today, Council Member Margaret Chin, chair of the Council's Committee on Aging, joined more than a hundred seniors, advocates, and fellow elected officials to demand a fair share of the City's budget for essential services for a growing elderly population.

"For too many years, our seniors have been consigned only a fraction of a percent of City spending on vital programs and services that they rely on every single day. That is unacceptable, and we as a City must do better by our seniors. These are the people who care for our children, take a leading role in our civic life, and contribute so much in terms of our City's artistic and cultural heritage," said **Council Member Chin**. "The money that the Council is asking this Administration to add to this year's budget to eliminate waitlists for homecare programs, support unpaid caregivers, and establish salary parity for Aging case managers is the very least our City can do to honor its obligations to our seniors. That is why I am joining everyday New Yorkers, advocates, and my Council colleagues to call on the Mayor not only to fund these programs, but to commit to a comprehensive plan to get Aging funding back to at least its pre-economic crisis peak."

"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."

According to the city Department for the Aging (DFTA), the elderly population is the fastest growing age group in New York City. The number of seniors is projected to increase by more than 1.8 million by 2030, meaning that one in five New Yorkers will be part of the elderly population. Despite the growing need for senior services, total spending on Aging programs represents **less than one-half of 1 percent** of the City's \$78.5 billion adopted budget.

This year, the proposed Executive Budget for DFTA is \$295 million -- **\$15 million less than last year's adopted budget**. While we appreciate the additional \$6.9 million in baselined funding, the Administration's Executive Budget only partially funds three of the 11 items outlined in the City Council's Preliminary Budget Response.

In order to address areas of greatest need, the Council asking the Administration to include the following in the Mayor's final, adopted budget:

- Bring salary parity for DFTA case managers this year by baselining \$7.3 million for Fiscal Year 2017, instead of the out-years as suggested in the Executive Budget.
- Baseline the \$3 million in City Council funding to cut the case management waitlist.
- Create a \$4 million funding stream to match the Federal funding that DFTA receives for programs supporting unpaid caregivers.
- Baseline \$4.25 million in one-time funding for Fiscal 2016 to address the anticipated waitlist for DFTA's homecare program.

“Despite another flush city budget, funding of cost-effective services that help city residents age with dignity in their own homes – rather than in much costlier and mostly taxpayer-funded institutional care settings – lags behind growing need,” said **Chris Widelo, AARP New York Associate State Director**. “Supporting caregiver and home care services, and other key programs that help keep the city livable for people of all ages, is both compassionate and smart investing. The surge of aging Baby Boomers has only just begun; it is urgent that the city recognize this reality – both for now and the future.”

Bobbie Sackman, LiveOn NY, Director of Public Policy, states, "LiveOn NY is proud to stand with Councilmembers Chin, Vallone and her colleagues to stop the senior budget dance. A fair city budget that reflects the lifespan would provide funding to erase waiting lists for case management and home care. It is time for full funding to address case manager salary parity to close the gap of \$20,000 inequity with other social services case managers. Dancing in place doesn't allow for implementing a caregiver support program to provide relief to family members dedicated to caring for their loved ones. Moving forward to include the needs of older adults is the right direction to move in.”

“As the number of older adults in New York City increases, it is critical that the budget for seniors reflect the growing need. As a direct service organization serving approximately 20,000 seniors a year at 26 sites around New York, I see the unmet needs for services across our programs. For example, we have 4,000 people on waiting lists for senior housing, our senior centers continue to serve more meals each day, and our case management programs are managing a growing number of clients. I'd like to thank Council Members Chin and Vallone for their leadership and commitment to our programs that serve our city's seniors and I urge the City Council and Administration to fully fund DFTA's budget to ensure that no senior is left without services,” said **Stuart C. Kaplan, Chief Executive Officer, Selfhelp Community Services**.

"Older adults are the fastest-growing population in New York City, but funding for senior services is not keeping pace with the demand. Neighborhood based services such as NORCs, meals, and case management support older adults to live with dignity in their communities. We urge the City to continue to invest in these programs, prevent service waitlists and preserve key community resources,” said **Susan Stamler, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses**.

“UJA-Federation of New York is proud to stand with our colleagues, and Council Member Chin, in strongly urging the Administration to invest in services for older adults. As the fastest growing population in NYC, it is imperative that DFTA's budget is able to meet the needs of older adults and their families and support them as they age-in-place with dignity,” said **Louisa Chafee, Senior Vice President, Public Policy and External Relations, UJA-Federation of New York**.

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