



**Testimony of Secretary Brian Duke, Department of Aging
House Appropriations Committee: Budget Hearing
Monday, February 10, 2014**

Good morning, Chairman Adolph, Chairman Markosek and distinguished members of the House Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present Governor Tom Corbett's proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2015 budget for the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

In my role as Secretary of Aging for the commonwealth, Governor Corbett has tasked me with upholding his commitment to our growing population of older Pennsylvanians. In fact the Pennsylvania State Data Center has estimated that by as early as next year, nearly 1 in 4 Pennsylvanians will be age 60 or older. As a result the need for services to care for the aging population continues to increase.

As you know, Pennsylvania is the only state in the nation to use Lottery funding solely for services to support its older residents. Because of this unique source of dedicated funding, over 75% of the department's budget is derived from the Lottery Fund with the remaining portions coming from federal sources.

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging's mission is to enhance the quality of life for all older Pennsylvanians through empowering diverse communities, the family, and the individual. This has been the mission for over thirty-five years and Governor Corbett's proposed FY 2014-15 budget provides increased support to continue this mission. At the department's foundation are prevention and protection. The department works to prevent instability in health and well-being for older Pennsylvanians that if left unaddressed, could result in those individuals having to receive institutional care and becoming dependent on government aid. In addition, a core function of the department is to help protect older Pennsylvanians from abuse, neglect, abandonment, and exploitation.

Pennsylvania's aging services network served over 1,000,000 individuals last year and is comprised of state and community-based agencies, organizations and advocacy groups, with thousands of individuals dedicated to serving older Pennsylvanians and their families. Other partners of the aging services network are the 52 Area Agencies on Aging, (AAA's) which serve as the local resource for information on programs and services. The network also includes a robust provider and volunteer component which help to enhance the quality of life for older Pennsylvanians.

Highlights of Governor Corbett's commitment to older Pennsylvanians can be seen by the fact that he proposed and signed into law the single largest investment for older adults in the history of the commonwealth. Through the Governor's leadership, and the support of the General Assembly an additional \$50 million was included in the FY 2013-14 budget for programs that benefit older Pennsylvanians. This unprecedented increase has enabled older Pennsylvanians to remain living in their homes and communities and have access to long-term care services. This comes at a time when there is more demand for services, such as in-home personal care and home-delivered meals, due to the rising number of older adults in the commonwealth.

This past year we have been able to remove over 4,300 individuals from the waiting list for services. In addition, we have been able to increase services to approximately 7,000 individuals. It's important to note we can provide these home and community based services at a substantially lower cost than institutional care. The Governor's proposed FY 2014-15 budget continues and expands upon this historic investment.

Governor Tom Corbett's commitment to older Pennsylvanians continues through his recent Executive Order to establish the Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Commission that I will co-chair along with the Secretary of the Department of Public Welfare, Bev Mackereth. This commission will help to examine various long-term care issues. In addition, the commission will study and provide recommendations on best practices to improve coordination of care for all persons in need of long-term care services and supports.

The Governor's proposed budget includes \$2 million dollars for our senior centers through a competitive grant process. The grants will provide an opportunity for our 551 senior centers to enter into a competitive grant process to receive funding to modernize their facilities, develop a more diverse membership, expand and increase quality programs and encourage sustainable and innovative programs and services. This will allow the centers to prepare for the changing demographics and make them attractive to a younger aging group thus, expanding services to more individuals.

The PACE, PACENET and PACE plus Medicare are Pennsylvania's prescription assistance programs for older adults that offer low-cost prescription medication to qualified residents, age 65 and older. Through the leadership and support of the Governor, his administration, and you, over 29,000 older Pennsylvanians have been protected from losing prescription drug coverage. Just last week the Senate passed HB 777, which will allow individuals enrolled in PACE or PACENET as of December 31, 2013, to remain eligible if their maximum income limit is exceeded due solely to a Social Security cost-of-living adjustment. In addition, the bill removes Medicare Part B premium payments from the definition of "income" thereby providing nearly 8,200 additional Pennsylvanians with prescription drug coverage. I thank you for your recent vote to provide these valuable benefits to our PACE participants.

In February 2013, Governor Corbett signed an Executive Order calling for the creation of the Pennsylvania Alzheimer's Disease State Planning Committee. I had the honor to serve as chairman of this committee, working with legislators, leaders in research and advocacy, consumers and their caregivers. Just a few days ago on February 7th, the committee presented its report and recommendations to Governor Corbett for review. The committee was charged to

examine the needs and research trends in the Alzheimer's population; study existing resources and needs of persons with Alzheimer's disease, their families and caregivers; and to develop a strategy that will mobilize Pennsylvania's response to the anticipated increase of Alzheimer's disease in the state. The department looks forward to working on the recommendations put forth by the committee to improve the lives of those living with the disease and their caregivers. My thanks to the legislators, appointed members of the committee, and all of the Pennsylvanians who provided comments to assist in the development of this comprehensive plan.

The APPRISE program experienced its most successful year in its history in 2013. The APPRISE program provides assistance to Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers and families through a network of volunteers and staff at Area Agencies on Aging throughout Pennsylvania. The program made 181,247 client contacts in 2013 surpassing the 100,000 client contact milestone. It should be noted Pennsylvania's APPRISE program is one of the most robust in the nation. APPRISE counselors provided free in-person or telephone assistance to help older adults understand Medicare and Medicaid eligibility and benefits, Medicare supplemental insurance, HMOs, and long-term care insurance.

What I have highlighted represents just a few of the commitments to older Pennsylvanians that Governor Corbett has fulfilled. However Governor Corbett realizes that the need for services to help older Pennsylvanians age and live well continues to grow. The Governor's proposed FY 2014-15 budget carries on his commitment and increases efforts to reduce waiting lists. In order to ensure we can continue to meet the growing need for services for our older population we need to examine funding opportunities. We all have a responsibility to provide services and support programs that guarantee our older adults living in Pennsylvania have the best quality of life possible.

I am grateful for the leadership of Governor Corbett and the commitment the legislature has provided to our older Pennsylvanians and look forward to addressing any questions you may have at this time.