



CONTACT: Ashley Chambers
chambersa@elderaffairs.org
850-414-2142

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Governor Scott's "Fighting for Florida's Future" Budget Fights to Expand Services to Florida Elders

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Rick Scott's 2017-18 "Fighting for Florida's Future" Budget recommends \$315.5 million for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs to reduce waitlists for frail elders in need of services, expand programs that protect impoverished elders needing guardianship, and assist individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Governor Rick Scott said, "Florida has the highest percentage of residents age 65 and over, and as our elder population continues to grow, we must remain fully committed to ensuring they have the support they need to remain healthy, safe, and independent. We are proud that so many elders are choosing to call the Sunshine State their home, and we look forward to continuing to welcome more seniors to our great state."

Governor Scott's "Fighting for Florida's Future" Budget includes:

- \$3 million to provide services for additional elders with Alzheimer's disease and relief for their caregivers through the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI);
- \$4 million for home and community-based services for more seniors at risk for nursing home placement through the Community Care for the Elderly Program (CCE);
- \$4.7 million to provide services for more of the frailest individuals through the Home Care for the Elderly Program (HCE);
- \$750,000 for the Office of Public and Professional Guardianship to continue guardianship services for vulnerable Floridians; and
- \$352,000 for the Aging and Disability Resource Centers to assess needs and provide services to elders across Florida.

Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Jeffrey Bragg said, "Governor Scott continues to make clear his priorities for the essential services we provide to seniors across Florida. I applaud Governor Scott for his commitment to serving Florida's seniors and thank him for his continued support of our Department. I am thrilled with the enormous good that this additional funding will do for our 5.2 million elders."

Pat Hogan, Dementia Care and Cure Initiative Statewide Task Force Member and Dementia Awareness Advocate, said, "There are more than 510,000 Floridians living with Alzheimer's Disease – a disease with no cure. Our mission has been to spread awareness about dementia and increase support for programs, like the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative, that focus

on both care and cure to help those individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. We are encouraged by the Governor's continued recognition of this important issue and commend him for providing this new funding."

Debbie Moroney, ACSW, CEO, Alzheimer's Project, Inc., said, "With this ADI budget recommendation, Governor Scott recognizes the critical need for respite services for the selfless caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and increased support for those living with dementia. I applaud Governor Scott for his continued support for the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative."

Randall Hunt, President of the Florida Association of Area Agencies on Aging and President & CEO of Senior Resource Alliance, said, "I am very thankful to Governor Scott for all of his support and investments in these programs that are vital for frail elders in Florida and allows us to help them maintain their health and independence in their own homes and communities."

Lisa Bretz, MSW, Executive Director of the Area Agency on Aging for North Florida, said, "Through this increased funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Governor Scott has shown his support for our organizations in our mission to promote the independence, dignity, health, and well-being of seniors and their caregivers, and we applaud him for this investment."

Linda J. Levin, MSG, Executive Director, ElderSource, said, "With his budget increase for Home Care for the Elderly and his continued investments in Community Care for the Elderly program, it is evident that Governor Scott understands the benefits of these programs for frail elders in our state. Increased funding to these crucial, cost-effective programs demonstrates his commitment to serving seniors in the state of Florida."

Karen Campbell, Executive Director, Office of the Public Guardian, Inc., said, "Through this funding, it is clear that Governor Scott recognizes Florida's tremendous need for public guardianship programs. This funding will allow us to help elders who have nowhere else to turn. I am so pleased that we can continue to partner with the Office of Public and Professional Guardians to accomplish this great mission."

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For more information about the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, visit www.elderaffairs.org.

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The Department of Elder Affairs, the State Unit on Aging, helps Florida's elders to remain healthy, safe, and independent. For more information, please visit elderaffairs.org