

Gathering to focus on far-reaching budget cuts to seniors, caregivers, advocates

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - A powerful press/community event is planned for 2 p.m. Thursday, June 29, at Senior Services Plus, 2603 N. Rodgers Ave., Alton, with Alton seniors, caregivers and advocates gathering to unite against Gov. Bruce Rauner's cuts to home care for the elderly.

Participants will highlight the far-reaching changes in care delivery for tens of thousands of Illinois seniors who rely on home care services, Cathy Contarino of IMPACT in Alton, said.

Contarino said proposed budget cuts to the successful Community Care Program, AARP Illinois, the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans, IMPACT Center for Independent Living, St. John's Community Care, SEIU Healthcare Illinois, local Alton seniors, and caregivers will be discussed.

"Under the governor's rules submitted to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR), 36,000 vulnerable Illinois seniors will be forced into a new, untested initiative called the Community Reinvestment Program, which aims to replace trusted home care workers with a host of different services providers, from Uber drivers to laundry services and meal vouchers," Contarino said in a release. "Seniors who are not enrolled in Medicaid are targeted for these changes, which will result in a 31 percent reduction in services on average.

"Seniors currently living independently in Illinois communities worry that such deep cuts and drastic changes will compromise their ability to remain in their homes. Premature nursing home placement would rob our seniors of their dignity and cost taxpayers up to \$15,600 more for each relocated senior than it would cost to keep that senior in the Community Care Program."