

# **Senior Services Plus and home care recipient provide oral testimony to Illinois House of Representatives**

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On June 30, 2015 Senior Services Plus Associate Executive Director Theresa Collins and recipient of the agency's in-home services Kathleen Andrews traveled to Springfield, Illinois. Both Collins and Andrews were motivated to provide testimony in front of the Illinois House of Representatives about the effects of having no budget or reduced budget for FY16 in the Community Care Program.

Collins, who also is the Vice President for the Illinois Association of Community Care Program, provided opening remarks on behalf of Senior Services Plus and the devastating effects having no budget or a reduced budget in the Community Care Program would have on the agency.

“As the budget uncertainty continues, providers of the Community Care Program will try to continue to provide services to the clients until there are no longer funds available. The Department on Aging has indicated to some that we need to continue to provide services through the budget impasse and that we will be paid retroactively from July 1st once a budget is in place, but we know that depends on what budget is passed, what money is available and Administration's willingness to spend that money.”

Aside from opening remarks, Collins spoke about the severity of the entire state of Illinois budget situation and that changes need to be made. Adding a striking notion that, “This cannot be done on the backs of the State's most vulnerable citizens. Do we truly want to be responsible for co-signing death certificates?”

Following Collins, Home Care Recipient Kathleen Andrews took to the podium to speak about the potential effects and the successes the Community Care Program has had on her life since 2002. Kathleen Andrews is 80 years old and lives independently in her home in Granite City, Illinois. Andrews worked for over 15 years as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) at nursing home facilities and hospitals primarily dealing with senior citizens.

During her testimony, Andrews stated “I don't know what I would do without the care and help from my Home Care Aide. She helps me with bathing, preparing my food, and taking me to my doctor's appointments.”

Currently, Andrews Determination of Needs (DON) score is 34 and receives 3 days (2 hours per day) a week of service. With the proposed changes to the DON score, Andrews would no longer qualify for the Community Care Program and would be left to enter a nursing home or struggle to maintain an independent lifestyle in her home with no assistance.

As an agency, Senior Services Plus stands firm in the belief that if a budget is not put in place soon, senior citizens living throughout the state of Illinois will suffer and be forced

into life threatening situations. We encourage all legislators and the Governor to come to a resolution with the budget in a manner that avoids these conditions at all costs.

Senior Services Plus is a not-for-profit organization that has been serving the Metro East Community since 1973. The organization provides Meals On Wheels, In-Home Care, Travel, Information & Assistance, and a Wellness Center. The agency is located at 2603 North Rodgers Avenue in Alton, Illinois. For more information on the programs and services offered, call 618-465-3298 ext. 100 or visit [www.seniorservicesplus.org](http://www.seniorservicesplus.org).