TENNESSEE COALITION FOR BETTER AGING

Promoting the general welfare of older Tennesseans and their families through partnerships that mobilize resources to educate and advocate for important policies and programs

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February 16, 2021

Dear State Legislator:

We're writing on behalf of the Tennessee Coalition for Better Aging (TCBA), made up of many organizations across Tennessee that support the health and general welfare of aging Tennesseans and their caregivers. We believe that Tennessee should be a healthy place to age and retire and that family caregivers need more support as they care for loved ones.

Priority issues for TCBA member organizations include: 1) long-term services & supports including home- and community-based services, 2) the long-term care workforce, 3) insurance coverage, 4) Alzheimer's and dementia, and 5) support for family caregivers.

TCBA urges you to seriously consider these 2021 opportunities in support of older Tennesseans:

- **Use of TANF Reserve Funds to increase financial support and services for grandparents raising grandchildren.** According to grandfamilies.org, there are more than 2.6 million grandparent householders responsible for their grandchildren who live with them, including **76,406 in Tennessee. The majority of these grandparent caregivers are under age 60 and still in the workforce.** 74% are white, 21% are black and close to 3% are Hispanic or Latino. **Almost 22% or 16,733 grandparent caregivers in TN are living in poverty.**

  We urge the state to consider **utilizing TANF funds to increase Grandparent/relative caregiver support to $300-500 per child per month. This increase will demonstrate Tennessee's commitment to supporting family caregivers and keeping children with their families and out of the foster care system, saving the state money.** The increased Families First per child monthly allocation will also help Tennessee align with TANF assistance provided by neighboring states like North and South Carolina and Ohio. **We also strongly urge you to support continued funding for services provided through the relative caregiver programs statewide.**

- **SB102/HB119 Creates Silver Alert program.**
  Sponsors: Sen. Massey, Becky , Rep. Faison, Jeremy
  Summary: Requires the TBI to implement a program to assist in the locating of missing, vulnerable citizens, called the Silver Alert program. Replaces the Care Alert program.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

AgeWell Middle TN
Alzheimer's Tennessee
FiftyForward
Greater Nashville Regional Council
Mental Health America of Mid South
TN Association of Adult Day Services
TN Assoc. of Agencies on Aging & Disability
Tennessee Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers
Tennessee Disability Coalition
Tennessee Justice Center
Tennessee Respite Coalition
West End Home Foundation

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- **SB133/HB828 Public health - information about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.**
  Sponsors: Sen. Crowe, Rusty , Rep. Kumar, Sabi
  Summary: Requires the department of health, in collaboration with the bureau of TennCare, to educate healthcare professionals and public health practitioners on the importance of risk reduction, early detection, and timely diagnosis of cognitive impairment and dementia by January 1, 2022. Also requires the department, in collaboration with other public and private healthcare agencies, to incorporate information about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias into its existing public health programs and services.

- **SB304/HB345 Recreates elder abuse task force.**
  Sponsors: Sen. Briggs, Richard , Rep. Carr, Dale
  Summary: Recreates the elder abuse task force, which was terminated and dissolved January 15, 2021 and specifies membership of task force. Extends date for the task force to submit its findings and recommendations to the governor and general assembly to January 15, 2022.

  It's TCBA's hope that recreating this task force will, in part, help facilitate review and planning related to recommendations in the 2020 Comptroller's Report on Financial Exploitation of the Elderly.

Thank you for your consideration of our priority issues and opportunities to make a difference for older adults and caregivers across Tennessee.

Sincerely,

Grace S. Smith, LMSW
TCBA Co-Chair, 2020-2021

James Powers, MD
TCBA Co-Chair, 2020-2021

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