

**TESTIMONY
BY MARIAN R. TODD
ON SB 294 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING FOR ELDERLY
NUTRITION PROGRAMS
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING
JANUARY 18, 2000**

My name is Marian Todd. Since 1991 I have been a volunteer for several of the nutrition programs that serve older adults in Dane County. For the first two years I delivered meals every week to homebound seniors on the near east side of Madison. The last several years my husband and I have provided transportation for and accompanied seniors who attend congregate meal sites offered by the Westside Coalition of Older Adults in Madison.

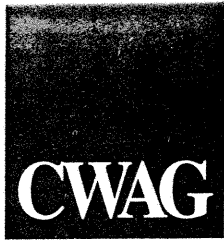
Both types of nutrition programs are essential to maintaining the quality of life for our senior citizens as they age. Both provide the obvious advantage of assuring seniors, for whom shopping and cooking have become much too difficult, at least one nutritious meal per day. The social contacts, also, both at the meal sites and during the meal deliveries for the homebound, help relieve the social isolation of aging and help seniors remain in their own homes as long as possible.

Additional funding is needed for both of these programs because of the increase in the number of older persons, especially those 85 years or older. I urge you to support the funding increases proposed in this bill. Thank you very much.

In 1975, three women, having done volunteer and professional work with the elderly in Mt.Horeb and the surrounding area, recognized the need for a meal program and home delivered meals. I was one of those three women. We started the program and I'm pleased to say that the program is still going strong. To emphasize my strong belief in the home delivered meal program, I would like to relate this story:

In March of 1976, Dane County was in the grips of a severe ice storm. I delivered the meals in Mt Horeb that early morning under dire circumstances. One of the meals was to a woman in town and the only way I could get to her door was to crawl on my hands and knees, sliding the meal ahead of me on the slick ice. My determination to get the meal to her was because I knew, having delivered many meals to her, the importance of the meal and just as important, for her to know I cared about her well being. The home delivered meal program should never be diminished.

Bette Johnson
Madison



Thomas L. Frazier, *Executive Director*

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups

TESTIMONY BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING
By Gail Schwersenska, January 18, 2000

The Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups supports SB 294 that provides for expanding funding for the elderly nutrition program. State funding for the Elderly Nutrition Program has not increased since 1994. This is especially taxing on a program that has seen a shift toward more costly home delivered meals to accommodate the growing population of people age 85 and over. Increased funding for the nutrition program is one of our top priorities.

Wisconsin's Elderly Nutrition Programs provide important nutrition to a very vulnerable population. They also provide opportunities for volunteerism, socialization, education and relief from isolation. Let me expand, briefly, on these points.

First, this program could not operate without the hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours contributed by the participants. Volunteers deliver meals, serve as hosts and hostesses, drive people into the nutrition sites, count money, set tables, serve meals, wash dishes and in some counties serve as nutrition site managers. Older people also serve on both governing and advisory boards and help to shape the programs they participate in. The philosophy of aging programs nationwide is to recognize older people as people of dignity and worth with a great deal to contribute towards the services they receive. Providing volunteer opportunities and being allowed to use those volunteer hours to match federal dollars reflects that philosophy.

Local nutrition sites serve as a place for folks to gather, to socialize and to learn. Depression is the number one mental health problem among older people and reducing isolation is proven to help prevent depression. Older people remain connected to their communities through the nutrition sites and are also given a variety of educational opportunities. Typically they learn about the types of foods they need to eat to stay healthy, they learn about interactions between medications, food and alcohol, they learn how to exercise and avoid falls and they learn about other benefits and services that are available to them. Of course, these are just some examples of activities that take place at nutrition sites.

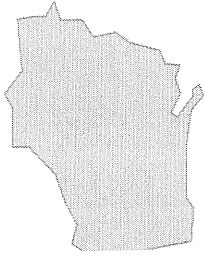
I have not addressed the importance of home delivered meals because I know there are others who will testify to that. Let me just say that in many cases the home delivered meals and the daily contacts with the drivers who deliver these meals are one of if not the only reason many older people remain in their own homes and out of more expensive alternative residential options. Home Delivered Meals are a vital part of long-term care services provided in the counties.

Once again, the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups urges you to support SB 294 and because of the shortness of this session, we would encourage the committee to provide a favorable recommendation in executive session as quickly as possible.

Rep. Sarah Waukau

WI Elderly Nutrition Program History of Persons Served and Funds Granted to Agencies

	Persons Served			Granted Funds				
	Congregate	Home Del	Total	Title III C1 Congregate	Title III C2 Home Del	USDA	State GPR	TOTAL
1993	91,105	17,615	108,720	\$ 7,352,746	\$ 1,821,347	NA	\$ 4,961,100	\$ 18,350,230
1994	88,861	23,165	112,026	\$ 7,595,638	\$ 1,887,728	\$ 3,426,364	\$ 5,440,500	\$ 18,243,505
1995	87,671	22,003	109,674	\$ 7,592,928	\$ 1,893,807	\$ 3,293,070	\$ 5,463,700	\$ 18,194,598
1996	84,524	21,283	105,807	\$ 7,115,273	\$ 2,200,623	\$ 3,249,315	\$ 5,463,700	\$ 18,028,911
1997	83,381	21,690	105,071	\$ 7,372,900	\$ 2,108,683	\$ 3,249,315	\$ 5,463,700	\$ 18,194,598
1998	83,754	21,748	105,502	\$ 7,540,698	\$ 2,235,757	\$ 3,255,778	\$ 5,463,700	\$ 18,495,933
1999	NA	NA	NA	\$ 7,536,895	\$ 2,229,222	\$ 3,099,782	\$ 5,463,700	\$ 18,329,599



Wisconsin Association of Aging Unit Directors

TO: Senator Robson and
Members of the Human Services and Aging Committee

FROM: Rita Odegaard, Chair, Legislative Committee

DATE: January 18, 2000

RE: SB 294

I am writing on behalf of the Wisconsin Association of Aging Unit Directors, in support of SB 294.

As advocates of Wisconsin's most vulnerable population, frail elders, we urge you support for this Bill. The last substantial increase in state funding for the Senior Nutrition Program was in 1988. Since that time inflation has decreased buying power in the program by 41%. At the same time the population of elders over the age of 85, those most likely to participate in the program, continues to grow each year.

You will hear from elders and their advocates about the important the nutrition program as a conduit to socialization, education, dispel loneliness and nutritious meals. But as good Stuart of public funds you should also know that this is a cost-effective program unmatched in human services. Every day throughout Wisconsin thousands of volunteers, mostly older people, show up at meal sites to serve meals, clean up and socialize. Thousands more, utilizing there own vehicles, travel the highways and back roads bringing hot nutritious meals to their peers who no longer able to cook or leave their homes. Many of these folks, a generation ago, were volunteering with the program or here in the Capital advocating for it.

The Nutrition Program is the heart of the Aging Program and the corner stone of long term care. Financial support for the program is a patchwork of federal, state, and county tax levy and private and participant contributions. But without additional funds to shore up this valuable program waiting list and congregate site closures will be a reality statewide.

Please support additional funds for this important program.

Dear Home Delivered Meal Participants:

January 12, 2000

On Tuesday, January 18 we will be taking some seniors down to the Capitol to speak to the need of the home delivered meal program. The area Agency on Aging informed us that they came very close to having waiting lists for home delivered meals this year. They said that we must do all we can to not let that happen.

I am asking that you state why you need home delivered meals on the bottom half of this sheet and how it has helped you. Because we are closed on Monday, the 17th I am asking that you send your comments back with the meal deliverer tomorrow, Friday, January 14th. Thank you for sharing and caring.

Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

Jan 14, 2000

Age 76, with a very serious illness, unable to prepare food for meals. Have limited mobility with most for time spent in bed. Home delivered meals mean a lot to us. Our "Senior center" should be commended for its work.

MaryAnn

Dear Home Delivered Meal Participants:

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

Yes I appreciate meals on wheels, I have arthritis and I'm not able to cook.

Worthy Alisue

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

At the end of Dec 99 I was released from the hospital after a month of care - (1 week in Hospital - 3 week in nursing home). One of the Conditions from the Doctors and the Social Service was to have Home Delivered Meals for my Husband and myself. The meals have made a positive difference in our lives. May we take this opportunity to thank all of you at Fitchburg Senior center for making all of this possible.

*Walter Rondorf
Helen Rondorf*

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

My brother and I, ages 91 and 96, respectively, have relied on Meals on Wheels and would really be lost without them. They are nutritious and tasty and we appreciate very much the agency and the volunteers who have made them possible for us.

Anna Joy

Dear Home Delivered Meal Participants:

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

I'm a volunteer for the "home delivered meals" and I know first hand how important this program is. I can't imagine having a waiting list for something that is so "needed immediately".

*Jain Amble
Fitchburg, WI*

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

Jan 14, 2000

Age 81 with serious emphysema and diabetes. Must remain on oxygen therapy 100% of time. Limited mobility and strength permits husband to prepare limited food items - i.e. sandwiches, coffee, and snacks. Delivered meals are our main course for each day.

Thank you.

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

*There is so many people that needs
food at home, we serve many people
each day. and I mean maybe some day
I will have the need for meals on wheels.*

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

I received meals while I was recovering from foot surgery and enjoyed it very much. I also have delivered meals on wheels and realized how much it means to the home bound and how much they look forward to a nice meal.

*Mary O'Brien
Fitchburg*

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

*In this day & age I believe the elderly -
living alone, or maybe ill need as much
assistance that this country owes the
people that fought & died for this
Country's and that is a great deal -
Wake up! - cut Gov. waste & help
our people - charity begins at home!*

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

I am not able to do any cooking. I have had a stroke. The only thing I am able to fix is something in the microwave + home delivered meals are much better for me. I really need this service

Marlene M. Egler

Dear Home Delivered Meal Participants:

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

I have MS and cannot cook for my self. I cannot stand anymore so it is unsafe for me to try to stand at the store to try to cook my own meals.

Sharon Warner

Dear Home Delivered Meal Participants:

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

I have delivered meals for 2 1/2 yrs
from Fitchburg. I see the eyes of gratitude
when a meal is left. Your investment in
dollars is returned many fold. We do still
Can not still need some help.

Doris Voss
(Home Deliver meal driver)

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

When left alone all of the sudden, ^{it provides} at least a Good Balanced meal every other

day. Most times you cant get out to get groceries, and the meals help to keep me with something around the house. (taken over the phone from B. J. Roark)

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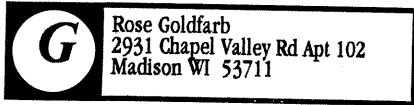
Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

The home delivered meals are a very important item in the lives of the elderly and for those that are homebound. By cutting back on the meals you will be affecting the lives of more people than you know. The meal program in Fitchburg at the Senior Center would be lost due the fact that there are not so many services provided for seniors in that area. We provide many services for people and having to have people be put on a waiting list, when they ask for a meal there is definitely a reason so by cutting back that would affect the Senior Center alot. In my eyes the meals need to be continued and many things added to the program

Ann Ruskud Intern

FROM:



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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

My name is ROSE GOLDFARB, I WILL REACH 94 YEARS OF AGE, IN FEB. 27-00 I SUFFER FROM SEVERE ANEMIA THAT CAUSES ME VERTIGO AND DIZZINESS. I WALK WITH THE HELP OF A WALKER. I AM UNABLE TO PREPARE MY MEALS AND DEPEND ON THE DELIVERED MEALS. I RECEIVE BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS EVERY 4 WEEKS. I AM SUFFERING FROM DEAFNESS AND WEAR EARING AIDS. I CONTRIBUTE \$25 A MONTH TO MY SENIORS CENTER, TO SUBSIDIZE MY MEALS. I ALSO SUFFER FROM HARDENING OF THE ARTERIES IN MY HEAD, ALSO SEVERE ARTHRITIS

Sincerely, ROSE Goldfarb

DEAR BECKY,
I WOULD LIKE TO BE
WITH YOU TO THE CAPITOL
IF YOU THINK I WILL
BE ALLOWED TO SPEAK
AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW
I AM A NEW YORKER AND
USED TO BE AN ACCEPTED
AND OFTEN REPRESENTED
THE GREAT PAINTERS
SPEAK. SIMILARLY
ROSE GOLD FARR

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

I have been receiving home delivered meals since June of 1999 after I fell in April & fractured my pelvis bone.

It was a God send and helped me out so very much.

I'm hoping the home delivered meals can continue, so it can help so many other seniors in time of need.

*Sincerely
Frieda Tiffany*

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Sincerely,

Becky Goodman

The reason we like home delivered meals is that I (Betty) go to Meritor Hospital 3 times a week for dialysis. We get home between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. and think it's wonderful to have warm meals ready for us. I also get worn out trying to prepare a meal myself.

I hope you will continue with this service. We certainly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Betty & Kenneth Hanson

1/18/2000

Being a Social Worker for the City of Fitchburg, I have seen first hand the importance of the Meals on Wheels Program. It is important to understand that elderly people in many cases have limitations on their physical abilities and what they can and cannot do. Meals can be a really difficult hurdle for them to face. Many times a square meal is sacrificed due to lack of ability to prepare a meal. The Meals on Wheels Program provides a square meal, and makes it possible for those elderly people in need of assistance to stay at home/apt. and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Please consider the importance of this program. Understand this, many elderly people can make it at home, or the home of their choice because of this program. Taking the Meals on Wheels Program away limits their options, maybe options they would never choose. This statement is strong, but so is the importance of keeping this program.

Thank you,

David Hill esd
David Hill, Social Worker
Fitchburg Senior Center

1-18-00

I am Diane Fronck, 44 yrs old and a volunteer meal deliverer. I feel it is so important to have meals that are hot and nutritious delivered to the home of people who cannot for many reasons get their own meal. The daily contact and hot meal make a difference (positive) in the lives of many people.

We are in favor of fund bill 294.
Diane Fronck