

Old Colony Elder Services

## Governor Takes Bite Out of Elder Meals Program - Nearly 250,000 meals cut

**Elder advocates reacted with surprise this week in response to Governor Deval Patrick's proposed 24% cut in the state's meals program for elders.**

"This is literally taking food off the table for older people," explained Al Norman, Executive Director of Mass Home Care. "This is one of the most visible and popular senior programs in the state. We never would have predicted a cut in such a key service."

The Governor's budget slashes the elder nutrition program line item (account 9110-1900) by \$1.5 million - from the FY 2012 level of \$6.325 million to \$4.81 million in FY 2013. This would leave elder nutrition funding for 2013 lower than it was 7 years ago in 2006 under Governor Mitt Romney ( at \$5.237 million).

According to Mass Home Care, the loss of funding will cut nearly a quarter of a million meals in 2013. Total meals served under this line item to seniors will plummet from 996,000 meals in 2012 to 754,000 meals in 2013 - a loss of 242,000 fewer meals.

"Old Colony Elder Services estimates its share of the impact would be \$75,000 that will cause a reduction of more than 12,000 meals across its service area of 23 communities in the greater Brockton and Plymouth county areas" said Diana DiGiorgi, Executive Director of Old Colony Elder Services.

The elder nutrition program is one of several meals programs available for seniors in the state, funded by federal and state monies. A total of 8.8 million meals will be served in FY 2012 counting all senior meals programs. Norman said elder nutrition groups have begun assessing how to best get the lost meals funding restored on Beacon Hill; "I am certain the Governor's people did not expect us to walk away from the table knowing a quarter of a million meals were being cut."

About OCES Incorporated in 1974, Old Colony Elder Services is a private, non-profit corporation designated as one of 27 Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. OCES offers a number of programs to serve seniors, individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers such as Family Caregiver Support; Adult Family Care; Supportive Housing; Nutrition; Money Management; Protective Services and Home Care.

OCES serves elders, their families and caregivers in 23 towns in Southeastern Massachusetts: Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, Carver, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Lakeville, Marshfield, Middleboro, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rockland, Stoughton, Wareham, West Bridgewater and Whitman.

The organization's mission is to provide services that support the dignity and independence of elders by helping them maximize their quality of life; live safely and in good health; and, prevent unnecessary or premature institutionalization. The agency has 157 employees. For more information call (508) 584-1561 or visit the website at [www.oldcolonyelderservices.org](http://www.oldcolonyelderservices.org)

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In 2009, OCES was honored with the Metro-South Chamber of Commerce's "Economic Impact Award". The agency has 140 employees. For more information call (508) 584-1561 or visit the website at [www.oldcolonyelderservices.org](http://www.oldcolonyelderservices.org)

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