



# WASHINGTON UPDATE

APRIL 2014

## Benjamin Rose Annual Meeting

Larry Minnix, President and CEO of LeadingAge, joins us to speak on "Redefining Age" at our Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 8, 2014, from 4pm to 6pm at the Conference Center at Benjamin Rose, 11890 Fairhill Road, Cleveland OH 44120. RSVP online at [benrose.org](http://benrose.org) or by phone to 216.373.1908.

## MyCare Ohio Forum

Consumers and advocates who want to learn more about the options available through MyCare Ohio are invited to a Community Forum on Thursday, April 10, 2014, noon to 4pm at the Conference Center at Benjamin Rose.

Register online at [www.benrose.org](http://www.benrose.org).

The forum is presented by Benjamin Rose, Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP), and Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA). Co-sponsored by the NEO MyCare Coalition and the NEO Consumer Voice for Integrated Care Coalition.

## Congressional Update

### One-Year "Doc Fix" Passes House, Senate

On Thursday, March 20, the House of Representatives passed a "doc fix" (H.R. 4302) that would avoid a 24% cut in Medicare payments to physicians for one year, also known as a suspension of the Sustainable Growth Rate, or SGR as it is more commonly known. The Senate also passed this agreement on Monday, March 31, in time to avert these cuts, which would have occurred after March 31 when the current fix or "patch" expired.

The Senate and House passage of this measure is in lieu of action on a permanent "doc fix" (H.R. 4015) because legislators have not agreed on a way to pay for this "fix." The one-year measure would continue current physician Medicare payment rates for a year and extend certain Medicare and Medicaid payment provisions and programs. The offset or "pay for" for the bill would come through changes to payment structures as well as front-loading 2024 Medicare sequestration cuts into the first half of 2024.

## President's Budget Proposal for FY2015

### Drastic Changes, Cuts Proposed to Senior Corps, SCSEP

On March 4, the President released his Fiscal Year 2015 proposed budget. Within the budget, there are some drastic changes proposed for the Senior Corps and Senior Community Services and Employment Program (SCSEP, or Title V of the Older Americans Act).

Senior Corps, a volunteer program for seniors, would be restructured dramatically. The Foster Grandparent Program and the Senior Companion Program, of which Benjamin Rose is the Cleveland-area administrator, would be incorporated into the AmeriCorps program. RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program), which is operated locally by the Cleveland Volunteer Center, would be funded through grants made under the Volunteer Generation Fund, but with far less funding ~ a two-thirds cut. The Corporation for National and Community Service

## Contact Us

We welcome your feedback!  
Please share questions,  
suggestions or concerns.

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has provided some FAQs here. The change in funding and management could possibly trigger a re-bidding of all shifted programs and impact program operations as well. Benjamin Rose staff will be following this issue closely.

The budget request once again proposes to move SCSEP, an employment program for low-income seniors, from the Department of Labor to the Administration for Community Living. It would cut SCSEP funding by \$54 million to \$380 million. In addition, the focus of SCSEP would change from an employment-and-skills-development program to a vehicle for supporting selected program activities, and potentially changing the role of national contractors.

### **\$25 Million Proposed for Elder Justice Initiative**

The President's budget also proposed \$25 million in new funding for elder justice programs, called the "Elder Justice Initiative." It would be first-time funding for the Elder Justice Act if approved. The funding would be divided as follows:

- \$13.8 million for Adult Protective Services, including an APS National Data System and Technical Assistance and national demonstration grants to both enhance APS data systems and development of program standards as well as an APS evaluation, and;
- \$11.2 million for research, including elder abuse screening, and to establish a better knowledge base about elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Bob Blancato, National Coordinator of the Elder Justice Coalition, testified on March 25 before the House Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee on behalf of the initiative. His testimony can be seen here. Also, Rep. Peter King (R-NY) is circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter on behalf of the initiative.

The proposed funding is a step in the right direction, but not the final destination. Benjamin Rose, which is currently involved in two research projects dealing with elder abuse, will continue to work with other advocates to ensure adequate funding for the Elder Justice Act.

### **White House Conference on Aging Funding Requested**

President Obama also requested in the Fiscal Year 2015 budget proposal \$3 million for a White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) in 2015. This would be the sixth WHCOA; the last one was held in 2005 and led to the 2006 reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. The White House is in talks with the Administration for Community Living and other stakeholders about the Conference.

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