



Pennsylvania Association of County
Human Services Administrators

An Affiliate of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

TO: Members, House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee
Members, Senate Aging and Youth Committee

FROM: Brinda Penyak, Executive Director

DATE: October 18, 2016

RE: Aging Waiver Enrollment

On behalf of the PA Association of County Human Services Administrators (PACHSA), I write to add our comments on the issues and concerns regarding Aging Waiver services, and the recent changes that transferred this task to Maximus as a contracted entity. PACHSA represents county human services administrators, and is an affiliate of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

PACHSA is encouraged by the joint hearing being conducted today, and our members are hopeful that the discussions will result in immediate corrective activities designed to assure that vulnerable seniors are readily afforded access to the services that they need to remain as independent as possible.

Throughout the hearing, the history of the Aging Waiver has surely been expressed by many who are offering testimony or submitting remarks. Knowing that the Committees have been monitoring this issue and have familiarity with it, our communication will instead focus on our interest in assuring effective partnerships with county human services administrators that will lead to positive change for the future. We join with our colleagues from the County Commissioners Association and others in calling for immediate solutions.

Counties have a variety of arrangements for the provision of Aging services, and varying types of structures for human services delivery. One constant among county human services is the need to consider the needs of our community in a holistic manner, assuring that plans to address constituent needs uses a coordinated approach. Whether the Area Agency on Aging is part of the county or a separate entity, the quality of services provided is of concern. County Human Services Agencies have reported a barrage of contacts from residents who are seeking services, have been referred to Maximus, yet no follow up is received. We've heard repeatedly that calls are not returned. We receive no follow up to know the status of cases once the county has passed them along, and we continue hearing about families who are frustrated, believing the county is failing to provide the follow up or required service.

We are not here today to focus on what happened up until now, and instead, we view the fact that the hearing was scheduled as a positive step toward finding the root of the problems and immediately

implementing a new strategy. We urge the Committees and the Department to work with local partners – counties and others – to assure a complete understanding of any changes that are implemented and to keep counties informed on the status of cases or any additional need for county intervention. We also urge the Committees and the Departments to be mindful to the need to include counties in solution seeking at the earliest possible moment, assuring that counties have the resources needed without new responsibilities being added.

PACHSA stands ready to work with the Departments of Aging and Human Services, Area Agencies on Aging, and others to implement procedures that meet the needs of our residents. We appreciate the opportunity to offer our remarks today.