

## Importance:

Between now and 2035, the percentage of the region's 60-plus population is forecast to nearly double. In fact, that age group will account for almost a quarter of the region's total population. But, as baby boomers become eligible for services from DRCOG, demand will continue to outpace funding. State and federal funding for the region (2010-2011) amounts to approximately \$8,557,000. The Strengths and Needs Assessment of Older Adults in the State of Colorado estimated that just to maintain the same level of services being provided in the region now would cost \$22 million in 2020. The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging estimates that just to keep pace with inflation and projected growth of the older population, at least a 12 percent funding increase is needed in federal funding alone. This phenomenal growth poses great challenges for the region in meeting the needs of its older adults

## Background/Key Issues:

As the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the Denver region, DRCOG is responsible for planning and funding for the delivery of services to older adults pursuant to the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) and the state Older Coloradans Act. DRCOG has earned a reputation as a statewide leader in advocacy for older adults.

DRCOG supports innovative federal legislation, "Project 2020: Building on the Promise of Home and Community-Based Services Act" (S. 1257/H.R. 2852) that enables seniors to avoid unnecessary and unwanted institutionalization while saving Medicare and Medicaid dollars. The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the National Association of State Units on Aging, in conjunction with the Administration on Aging and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, have developed a coordinated national long-term strategy to enable older adults and persons with disabilities to get the support they need to successfully age where they want to – in their own homes and communities. The strategy incorporates a comprehensive and integrated approach to enable older adults and individuals with disabilities to make their own decisions, take steps to manage their own health risks, and to receive the care they choose in their own homes and communities as long as possible.

State funding increased significantly early in the decade, thanks to the efforts of a coalition of senior advocates of which DRCOG and the state's other AAAs have been an integral part. Since then, funding has fluctuated, suffering cuts

## Did You Know?

Currently 13% of the region's population is over the age of 60. By 2035, that percentage will be 23%.

# Issues Paper

## Planning and Funding for Aging Services

during the decade's two recessions. For example, during the 2009-10 legislative session funding was reduced by \$1 million from the previous budget year. This reduction was carried over into the 2010-11 budget.

### **Status (as of June 2010):**

On the federal level DRCOG is involved in developing policies that will guide 2011 reauthorization of the OAA. In addition, health care reform presents a number of challenges and opportunities. DRCOG will be determining what these changes mean in relation to the DRCOG AAA's roles and responsibilities with Medicare.

On the state level DRCOG advocated passage of State H.B. 10-1053, which would require the state to conduct a study of the cost-savings to the state of increasing funding for services that will delay unnecessary and unwanted institutionalization of the State's seniors. Results of the study will be available by July 2011. DRCOG will continue to closely monitor and assess future state budget cuts on the delivery of services to seniors.

**For more information, contact:**

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