



Support statement for OHA Budget Article Wednesday 4-2-25. Subcommittee on Human Services, Chair Tanzi

Carol Costa – SACRI Executive Director

As Executive Director of SACRI, I wish to write in support the Office of Healthy Aging (OHA). OHA and in particular Maria Cimini and her entire team are doing critical work to support RI's ever growing aging population. And SACRI and OHA work closely on many initiatives, outreach, and commissions to advance the individual and collective missions of our agencies.

OHA in its work accomplishes wide swaths on impact including but not limited to: Adult Protective Services, Elder Rights, Medicare resources, guardianships, long term care, State Ombudsman Program, coordinating at home supports, healthcare coaching, caregiver support, housing security, responsibilities of federal reporting, older adult policy development, and coordinating community partners to support healthy aging throughout RI. These are no small tasks. Maria and her team have accomplished much with a lean and enthusiastic staff. SACRI supports the allocation of money in the Governor's budget for the OHA.

SACRI is also taking this chance to publicly commend the work and ask the GA to support this budget article and dare I say increase it. Please consider adding funding to OHA budget to increase support for local senior centers and programs to make the total \$2M. There are senior centers and local senior programs in every RI community who are there every day assisting older adults and their families. The addition of an additional \$400K would amount to twenty cents per person over age 65 and would be a significant way to help programs in all communities esp. when there may be federal cuts on the horizon as the ACL gets dismantled and its programs spread across other agencies.

OHA touches people where they are; in homes, in senior centers, on the phone, and monitoring the APS hotline. The number of people they impact is huge by any measure.

- Each year, **one in ten** Americans aged 60 years or older experience abuse
- Estimates of elder financial abuse and fraud cases range from \$2.9 billion to **\$36.5 billion** annually.
- Seniors who experience abuse or neglect are **twice** as likely to be hospitalized as their peers.
- Elder abuse is underreported: it is estimated only **one in twenty-three** cases are known to authorities.

Thank you for your time and I thank OHA for all the work they do to support our aging population.

Carol Costa – SACRI ED