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March 2016

## **April 5 Springfield Rally Day Aims to Tell Legislators How State Budget Impasse Harms Older Adults**

A diverse group of organizations and individuals will rally in the State Capitol April 5 to urge legislators to pass a state budget and end the impasse that has increasingly put the lives of older adults at risk since the start of the state fiscal year on July 1.

All concerned residents, including older adults and those who care for them, are invited to the rally, which will be from 2 to 4 pm in the Capitol Rotunda. "The lives of our older adults are at risk. We wanted a way to let the public and legislators know how the budget impasse is affecting the senior population and those that serve them," said Tracey Colagrossi, president of the Association of Illinois Senior Centers (AISC), which is coordinating the rally.

Older adults in some parts of the state have seen home-delivered meals cut back, congregate dining sites closed, Information and Assistance curtailed, transportation to doctor appointments and grocery shopping stopped and other services that make it possible for them to remain independent in their homes reduced or suspended.

The agencies that provide these services are using furloughs, hiring freezes, reduced hours and salary cuts to make their limited revenues go as far as possible to continue meeting the needs of the older adults and people with disabilities they serve, but the only real solution is a state budget with adequate revenues to support essential services that all Illinoisans value.



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Colagrossi, who is also director of Senior Services for Hanover Township, and Theresa Collins of Senior Services Plus in Alton organized the event, and are also working with Lori Hendren of AARP Illinois. All Area Agencies on Aging in Illinois, including AgeOptions, are supporting the effort, along with the National Association of Social Workers and AARP Illinois.

Representatives of service providers, senior centers, Area Agencies on Aging, family members and caregivers, legislators and especially older adults are invited to share their stories at the rally. "We want anyone who is impassioned to speak," Colagrossi said. "We're also asking people – whether they're coming or not – to ask their legislators to meet with the group."

Information about the rally, and a video that explains the effects of the budget impasse on older adults and what individuals can do, are available on the website [starvingseniorsil.org](http://starvingseniorsil.org). Rally information is also available by calling (630) 973-0244. Transportation may be available.