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The Governor's Proposed Budget Would Disproportionately Affect California's Seniors

The Governor's Proposed Budget would affect multiple facets of some seniors' daily lives, from lowering the amount of cash assistance they have to meet daily needs, to cutting domestic services that help seniors and persons with disabilities remain in their homes, to reducing access to health care services. Specifically, the Governor proposes to:

- Suspend the state's 2008 and 2009 cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for **Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP)** grants for savings of \$23.3 million in 2007-08 and \$305.6 million in 2008-09. In February, the Legislature and the Governor delayed the state COLA from June 2008 to October 2008, but did not take action on the June 2009 COLA.
- Reduce the number of hours of service provided to low-income seniors and people with disabilities through the **In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program**, for state savings of \$109.4 million in 2008-09.
- Reduce payments to many providers who treat **Medi-Cal** patients by 10 percent. Lower payments could reduce access to health care services. Research suggests that California's low payments to providers are a barrier to accessing health care services, and the Administration recognizes that "certain providers may choose not to continue their participation in the program" as a result of the cuts.
- Eliminate dental and other medically necessary services for adult **Medi-Cal** recipients, for savings of \$134.0 million in 2008-09. Other benefits that would be eliminated include acupuncture, audiology, chiropractic, incontinence creams and washes, optometry, podiatry, and psychology.
- Stop paying the **Medicare Part B** premium for certain seniors and other individuals who are enrolled in both Medi-Cal and Medicare. As a result, approximately 44,000 low-income seniors and other persons would have to pay the \$93.50 monthly premium or pay for outpatient services out of pocket until they meet their Medi-Cal "spend-down" requirement.
- Reduce funding for the **Adult Protective Services (APS) Program** by 10 percent, for state savings of \$6.1 million in 2008-09. The APS Program assists elderly and dependent adults who are functionally impaired, unable to meet their own needs, or are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Reduce random inspections of certain care facilities, including **elderly day support facilities**, from once every three years to once every seven years. Reduced inspections could affect the safety of these facilities.
- Reduce the amount of assistance provided to low-income seniors through the **Senior Citizens' Renters' Tax Assistance and Property Tax Assistance programs** by 10 percent and reduce the number of participants in the **Senior Citizens' Property Tax Deferral Program** by 10 percent.