

February 12, 2010

CARIE

Edward J. Zogby
Bureau of Policy
PA Department of Public Welfare
Room 431 Health & Welfare Building
Harrisburg, PA 17105

RE: Changes to State Supplementary Payment Levels (40 Pa.B. 479)

Dear Mr. Zogby:

On behalf of the Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE), I am writing to oppose the Department of Public Welfare's (DPW's) notice posted in the January 16, 2010 Pennsylvania Bulletin announcing DPW's cuts to the State Supplementary Payments (SSP) levels. We also oppose the fact that SSP beneficiaries received little if any notice about the cuts leaving no time to plan for a sudden and unexpected drop in their income.

Those receiving the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit are living below the poverty level and even with the addition of SSP; their incomes are not adequate to meet basic needs. The loss of \$5.30/month for individuals and \$10.40/month for couples means many older Pennsylvanians will have increased difficulty meeting their expenses for food, heat, medications and other basic necessities. Our nation is experiencing the worst economy since the Great Depression. Those receiving the SSP are disproportionately affected because of their low income. CARIE requests that the SSP be restored to help ensure the health and well-being of these individuals.

CARIE is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for frail older adults by working to protect their rights and promote awareness of their special needs and concerns. We understand the difficulties low income older adults have in meeting their monthly expenses. It is through this experience that we request that DPW immediately rescinds the cuts.

There is a compelling moral argument that these cuts will cause irreparable harm to this vulnerable population. We hope that you will rescind the cuts and restore any lost SSP payments, while identifying other revenues to offset any additional costs anticipated with program growth. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Executive Director

Executive Director
Diane A. Menio, MS

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