

Date of Hearing: June 19, 2018

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE

Ash Kalra, Chair

SB 1026 (Jackson) – As Amended April 30, 2018

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Older adults and persons with disabilities: fall prevention.

SUMMARY: Establishes the Dignity at Home and Fall Prevention Program and requires California Department of Aging (CDA) to provide grants to Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) for injury prevention services. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Dignity at Home and Fall Prevention Program within CDA and requires the CDA to provide grants to AAAs for injury prevention information, education, and services for the purpose of enabling older adults and persons with disabilities to live independently in the home environment for as long as possible, as specified;
- 2) Requires a participating AAA with grant funds to provide information and education on injury prevention to older adults and persons with disabilities living in the community, referral-related resources and services in the community. Also requires AAAs to provide home environmental assessments and assessments of individual injury prevention needs, including instruction on behavioral, physical, and environmental aspects of injury prevention;
- 3) Requires a participating AAA to partner with local public and private nonprofit agencies that are experienced in injury prevention services, as specified;
- 4) Requires the Dignity at Home and Fall Prevention Program to include funding for injury prevention needs, including injury prevention equipment, services, materials, and labor costs for homeowners and renters meeting income requirements;
- 5) Specifies required equipment and activities covered under the program;
- 6) Provides limitations for eligibility for services and equipment;
- 7) Requires that all other potential funding sources be exhausted before funds appropriated for these provision be used;
- 8) Requires the CDA, in consultation with experts knowledgeable in injury prevention for older adults and persons with disabilities, to develop and compile training materials and program standards for implementation of these provisions;
- 9) Requires the director, in consultation with experts knowledgeable in injury prevention for older adults and persons with disabilities, to establish an application process and a selection methodology for grants;
- 10) Requires the CDA, to ask a grant applicant to submit a plan that details how the AAA will provide injury prevention education, assessment services, equipment, and activities in an effective and cost-appropriate manner, as specified;

- 11) Requires the grant funding to be sufficient to provide injury prevention education, assessment services, equipment, and activities necessary for injury prevention in the home;
- 12) Requires the director of CDA, in consultation with experts knowledgeable in injury prevention for older adults and persons with disabilities, to identify specific performance measures for grant recipients to include in their report, as specified;
- 13) Requires an AAA that receives a grant to submit a report to CDA and to the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of each house of the Legislature that includes the specific performance measures identified by CDA, information on the administrative costs incurred by the agency in carrying out the program, and any barriers to service that the agency encountered;
- 14) Requires funding of grants to be subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature in the Budget Act or another statute;
- 15) Requires that grants do not exceed \$150,000 to each AAA;
- 16) Repeals the statute that created the Senior Housing Information and Support Center within CDA and that created the center's functions; and,
- 17) Repeals the statute that created the Program for Injury Prevention in the Home Environment;

EXISTING LAW:

The Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act, finds and declares that one in 3 Americans over 65 years of age suffers a fall each year, often in the home, which can cause serious injury and depression. The act establishes the California Department of Aging, and sets forth its duties and powers, including, among other things, entering into a contract for the development of information and materials to educate Californians on the concept of "aging in place" and the benefits of home modification.

Also establishes the Senior Housing Information and Support Center within the department for the purpose of providing information and training relating to available innovative resources and senior services, and housing options and home modification alternatives designed to support independent living or living with family.

Establishes the Program for Injury Prevention in the Home Environment, under which the department, through the Senior Housing and Information Support Center, is required to award grants to eligible local level entities for injury prevention information and educational programs and services.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- Ongoing costs of approximately \$370,000 per year to CDA for oversight, operating expenses, and administrative expenses.
- Significant costs for awarding grants to AAAs. Each AAA can be awarded up to \$150,000. There are currently 33 AAAs for a potential total of up to \$4.95 million if all 33 AAAs were awarded the maximum grant amount.

COMMENTS:

The author states, “For elder and disabled Californians, the risk of fall at home is very real and can have long-lasting repercussions. For too many, the difference between aging in place and institutionalization may be simple home modifications to prevent falls and ease access.

“SB 1026 creates the Dignity at Home and Fall Prevention Program, which tasks the state’s Department of Aging with making grants to area Agencies on Aging for injury prevention information, education and services to enable older adults and those with disabilities to live independently in their own homes, with modifications. The program will provide funding for injury prevention equipment, activities and labor costs, and asks the Agencies on Aging to partner with local public and private agencies with experience in injury prevention – medical providers and hospital systems, fire departments, independent living centers, and home modification providers – in the provision of these services. Studies show that basic home modifications can improve safety and make it easier to maneuver about the home – all while forestalling hospitalizations and nursing home placements.”

DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND AAA

The California Department of Aging (CDA) administers programs that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers, and residents in long-term care facilities throughout the state. It administers funds allocated under the federal Older Americans Act, the state Older Californians Act, and through the Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) program.

CDA contracts with and provides leadership and direction to the 33 AAAs operating in California. The AAAs play a key role in planning, developing, coordinating and delivering a wide range of services and supports to consumers in their local planning service areas. They directly manage federal and state-funded services that help older adults find employment; support older and disabled individuals to live as independently as possible in the community; promote healthy aging and community involvement; and assist family members as care givers. They function as a community link at the local level for development of home and community-based services provided under the department’s programs.

AAAs are required to implement CDA’s mission at the local level, with particular emphasis on coordinating with local systems to enable individuals to live out their lives with maximum independence and dignity in their own homes and communities through development of comprehensive and coordinated systems of home and community-based care.

Fall Prevention

One in three people over age 65 suffers a fall each year, often in the home. Falls can cause injuries as simple as bumps and bruises, or as complex as broken hips. The more severe the injury, the more likely a fall could result in hospitalization and institutionalization. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) reports that falls for seniors can be costly. In 2015, the medical costs for falls totaled more than \$50 billion. Medicare and Medicaid paid 70 percent of these costs. According to CDCP, one out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or head injury; 2.8 million older people are treated in emergency rooms a year for fall injuries; and over 800,000 patients a years are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of head injury or hip fracture.

CDCP recommends the following home modifications to help prevent falls:

- Add grab bars inside and outside the tub or shower and next to the toilet.
- Install railings on both sides of stairs.
- Improve lighting in the home by adding more or brighter light bulbs.
- Remove items that can cause falls, including small throw rugs.

CDA and AAAs offer a wide array of programs, at least two of which currently offer services in fall prevention.

The Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Program distributes state and federal funds to local AAAs to support healthy lifestyles and promote healthy behaviors at multipurpose senior centers, at congregate meal sites, through home delivered meal programs, and at other appropriate sites. These evidence-based programs seek to reduce the risk of chronic diseases among California's older adults by teaching techniques and strategies that delay and/or manage chronic health conditions. Activities promote improved nutrition, emotional and social well-being, physical fitness, and fall prevention. However, funds are not typically used to make improvements in the home that would reduce risk of falls.

Local Multipurpose Senior Service Program (MSSP) sites provide social and health care management for frail elderly clients who are certifiable for placement in a nursing facility but who wish to remain in the community. The goal of the program is to arrange for and monitor the use of community services to prevent or delay premature institutional placement of frail clients. MSSP funds may be used to provide an array of services including adult day care, chore and personal care assistance, protective supervision, care management, respite, transportation, meals, social services and communication services. MSSP funds can also be used for housing assistance, which may include provision of physical adaptations and assistive devices, emergency assistance in situations that demand relocation, temporary lodging expenses in particular situations, and assistance to restore utility services.

Staff Comments: This bill would repeal the Senior Housing Information and Support Center and the Program for Injury Prevention in the Home Environment. Both of these programs were funded via the General Fund from 2000-2002; however, neither have been funded since December 2002. Therefore, repealing these programs will have no fiscal effect on CDA.

Argument in Support: In their letter, the California Association for Health Services at Home (CAHSAH) states, "This bill will enhance California's Area Aging Agencies (AAAs) by creating the *Dignity at Home and Fall Prevention Program* which would provide grant opportunities to inform and educate the public about injury and fall prevention services, including home modifications specifically designed to prevent falls."

Argument in Opposition: None.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

AARP

California Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A)

California Association for Health Services at Home (CAHSAH)

California Senior Legislature
County of San Diego
Disability Rights California (DRC)
Monterey County Board of Supervisors
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
San Francisco Human Services Agency
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Santa Barbara Village
Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
Ventura County Board of Supervisors
One individual.

Opposition

None on file.

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