

The lives of over 80,000 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's senior citizens are supported and transformed through in-home services funded through PennCare, a program administered by the state's 52 Area Agencies on Aging under the guidance of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. In addition, many other seniors receive services through senior centers, where they and their families receive information and assistance in accessing benefits and other community resources. Thousands of other vulnerable adults receive support through the protective services and Ombudsman services made available through the Area Agencies on Aging.

For the past five years, public funding for the PennCare program has not kept pace with inflation. As a result, the resources needed to enable the Area Agencies on Aging's care managers to respond to the all-too-real needs of thousands of our senior citizens have simply not been available, no matter how hard they try to stretch the available monies to meet the needs they see every day. Today, the Pennsylvania Department of Aging estimates that there are over 4,000 seniors who are waiting for urgently needed services, such as providing many seniors their only nutritious meal of the day, or helping them take a bath safely, or helping to get them to needed medical appointments.

This book is the Aging Network's attempt to put a human face on this statistic, to communicate to our elected and appointed officials the urgent and very real needs of our senior citizens that the Commonwealth can no longer afford to ignore. The nearly 200 stories included in this FacesBook were drawn from the active files of care managers in the Area Agencies on Aging across the Commonwealth. They tell a story of the isolation, despair, and mounting health problems facing too many of our seniors, especially those who, through no fault of their own, do not have a safety net of family or friends. .

Some state officials have testified that less than one third of the Commonwealth's seniors who are being denied in-home services are eligible for services in a nursing home. Their statements suggest that the remaining two thirds of our seniors on the Waiting Lists are not experiencing urgent needs for these services to enable them to continue to live in their own homes. The stories in this book, however, document that many of those seniors waiting for services are just one fall away from placement in a nursing home. These stories illustrate that a relatively small expenditure of Lottery or other public funds could make all the difference in the world for thousands of this state's senior citizens.

On behalf of the Commonwealth's Area Agencies on Aging, and our partners in the Senior Supports Coalition, we invite you to take a few minutes to read these stories that may help you to gain a better understanding of why we are urging elected and appointed officials in state government to provide increased funding for PennCare in next year's budget. Without this support, more seniors will have their health and quality of life compromised.