



SWPPA – 2026 Policy Priorities

Over 550,000 residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania are age 65 and older, a number that grows by over 10,000 annually. Over the next 15 years, the number of residents age 85 and over will grow by 70%. By 2030, 1 in 3 Pennsylvanians will be over the age of 65.

As we look for creative solutions to ensure that all SW Pennsylvanians not only live longer but thrive as they age, SWPPA strongly advocates for robust and forward-looking public policies and administrative actions in support of healthy aging at all levels of government: municipal, county, state and federal. We must have a unified and seamless effort focused on preserving the ability for all of us to age and live well, with economic stability and dignity within our communities. Failure in this effort is not an option.

Our priorities are organized below according to federal and state focus.

FEDERAL LEVEL PRIORITIES:

- Reauthorize the Older Americans Act by supporting passage of [S.2120](#)
- Preserve, protect and adequately fund critical Medicaid programming in support of services improving the lives of older adults and those living with disabilities
- To support the Direct Care Workforce by advocating for passage of [H.R. 5494](#) Essential Workers for Advancement Act.
- Advance mental health parity in Medicare, expanding coverage to include interventions that will better address the mental health needs of older adults.

STATE LEVEL PRIORITIES:

- Preserve, protect and grow state funding for services for older adults, with a focus on a strong lottery fund restricted for use in support of older adults
- Adopt the rate recommendations for all services within OLTL's rate study, which reflects a 23% increase for Commonwealth Providers – which would enable providers to more effectively combat the Direct Care Workforce Crisis
- Support, fund and grow a robust and fluid long-term living continuum of care
- Strengthen and adequately fund local Area Agencies of Aging as the hub for aging services at the community level
- Upgrade and enact the Older Adults Protective Services Act (OAPSA)
- Support and advance the adoption of Age-Friendly principles