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Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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Missouri Association Of Area Agencies Applauds Governor For Support of Two Key Programs in ‘State of State’ Message

Jefferson City, MO: The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4) today issued a statement applauding Governor Jay Nixon for his support of Missouri’s home-delivered meals program for seniors and his support for reauthorization of the Missouri Rx prescription drug program.

During his annual “State of the State” message, Governor Nixon pledged, “my budget will provide good nutrition for thousands of house-bound seniors who rely on home-delivered meals” and called on the Missouri legislature to send a reauthorization bill for the Missouri Rx program to his desk for signature.

“One of the most important services that Missouri’s Area Agencies on Aging provides to seniors is our nutrition and food program.” said Catherine Edwards, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4). “While many people are able to visit local

senior centers throughout the state and enjoy nutritious meals, there are many more who are homebound who require this service desperately.”

The home delivered meals program is designed to deliver a nutritionally balanced meal to homebound individuals that represents one-third of a typical adult’s Recommended Daily Allowance of nutrients. Participants in the program must be 60 years of age or older and physically or mentally unable to leave their homes. Priority is given to people who have no immediate family members available to assist in meal preparation or delivery; individuals who require only intermittent support, (such as individuals recuperating from surgery or hospitalization); and people who are in Medicaid services program of the Missouri Dept. of Health and Senior Services . A limited number of meals are also available for people age 18-59 years of age who are disabled.

“Adequate funding for the home-delivered meals program is vital to insuring that homebound seniors have a reliable, nutritionally sound source for food,” said Edwards “These meals are a lifeline for many seniors. For many seniors this is their only hot meal of the day. Having this important resource allows many seniors to continue to live independently, at home, and avoid the expensive option of institutionalized care,” added Edwards.

Home and community based services like home delivered meals save the state money in the long run. The typical cost per home delivered meal averages between \$5.50 and \$7.00, depending upon the content of the meal and its preparation location. If someone is forced into facility care due to lack of these simple supports the average cost per day jumps to \$138 per day. Last year, the Area Agencies on Aging delivered more than 5.2 million meals to seniors at home, and served more than 2.6 million meals to seniors at the more than 200 Senior Centers they operate statewide.

Edwards also cited Governor Nixon’s support for reauthorization of the Missouri Rx prescription drug program. “The Missouri Rx program has made prescription drugs both accessible and affordable for thousands of Missouri seniors since 2006,” said Edwards. “This year, the Missouri legislature will decide if that program will continue for the next five years. MA4, applauds the

Governor for his call for reauthorization and will rely on his support as the measure moves through the state legislature,” said Edwards. “We believe that the continuation of MoRx will save lives, and lead to an improved health picture for low-income and disabled seniors throughout the state,” added Edwards.

The Missouri Rx program is designed to work in conjunction with the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, and pays 50% of all out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs covered under Medicare. This includes expenses such as co-payments and deductibles that exist under typical Medicare Part D plans.

During 2010, nearly 207,000 Missourians were covered by this benefit program. If not reauthorized during the next legislative session, the program will expire in August of 2011. State Rep. Tishaura Jones and State Sen. Jolie Justus have introduced legislation to reauthorize this important program.

About The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4)

The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4) was founded in 1973 to serve as a statewide advocate and resource for older Missourians. MA4 is comprised of the state’s 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), which were created under the 1973 amendments to the Older American’s Act of 1965. For more than 35 years, these local agencies have been providing vital services, programs and information to millions of Missourians and their caregivers, including legal services, home-delivered meals, disease prevention and health promotion, transportation, public benefits counseling, senior center services and activities and in-home services. The 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) provide a coordinated network of care in implementing statewide initiatives, which are designed to help older Missourians maintain their independence and give them a voice in articulating their concerns and changing needs.

As the official statewide association of these agencies, MA4 is dedicated to carrying out its mission of service, information and advocacy to improve the lives of older Missourians and to plan for the changes that will take place as the aging population grows in number and importance in the next decade.

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