

# Seniors prefer help at home

By TIM RICHARD

Senior citizens from Oakland, western Wayne and Genesee counties say it would be cheaper for the state to help them maintain their own homes than to keep them in institutions—and they'd be happier. They also say they resent Michigan Department of Social Services (DSS) paperwork required when they visit drop-in or "multi-purpose" centers.

Four hundred persons packed the Oakland County commissioners' auditorium

Pontiac Monday to tell their stories to the joint legislative committee on aging, chaired by Sen. Joseph Snyder (D-8). Their stories were heard by state Reps. Ruth McNamee (R-Birmingham), W.V. Brotherton (R-Farmington) and Mel Larnen (R-Oakland).

THE MOST detailed recommendation came not from a senior citizen but a professional in the field, Lynn Schaneman, who handles the hot meals program for the Oakland-Livingson Human Services Agency.

"Twenty to 30 per cent of those in nursing homes wouldn't need to be there if there were supportive services for their homes," she said.

By supportive services Mrs. Schaneman meant help with repairs, relief for persons caring for aging relatives, snow shoveling and upkeep.

"Supportive services would cost \$100 to \$200 a month, but that's still less than \$1,000 a month for a nursing home," she said.

Her program serves 1,100 meals a day to senior citizens, but only 10 per cent are home-delivered. "Sometimes they have to go into a nursing home because we can't serve one hot meal a day," she said.

A serious problem is lack of public transportation with hydraulic lifts, she said, citing the Farmington area.

JOHN W. FELTER, of the Rochester, Arden Recreation Authority, criticized the paperwork involved in obtaining senior citizen property tax exemptions.

George Johns, chairman of the board at the Walled Lake Multiple Service Center, was applauded for endorsing Form 1028, which he said requires seniors to divulge their assets and incomes, and even to show their social security checks before they can use the centers. Form 1028 reportedly emanates from the DSS.

"We're not signing up for welfare," added Albert Gougeon of Hazel Park. Staff workers at the multi-purpose centers have become increasingly involved in detail work, confined to their desks," said Leo Burley of Hazel Park. "The staff has become gradually divorced from the seniors."

You have to stand in line to see a staff worker.

From a wheelchair, Dave Vogel, a resident of Oakhill Nursing Home in Farmington who attends the Living Opportunity Center, said the center has a large number of volunteer aides. "But they're female, primarily, and they can't do heavy lifting of patients and wheelchairs."

Vogel added that wheelchairs have been made available during non-class hours for senior citizens and the handicapped.

THE REV. GEORGE Gerritsen of the Lake Orion-Oxford Fish organization said 274 persons requested rides last year from NEOTrans, the Northeast Oakland Transportation agency. He asked lawmakers to consider aiding such programs which are funded through the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority.

Harold Draper of the Genesee County Commission on Aging said seniors' number one desire is to remain in their own homes—"a prospect becoming more difficult with rising property taxes, prices, utility rates and maintenance costs."

Yet it would be cheaper to help seniors remain in their homes, Draper said, than to place them in foster homes or in institutions. One alternative, he said, is day care centers.

Sue-Anne Stein, of the Area 1-B Agency on Aging in Berkley, called for "an integrated network of supportive services" to help people live in their own homes.

Such a network would include home repairs, day care centers, telephone insurance, relief for younger persons caring for an aged relative, and homemaker aid.

Leo Mahany of Royal Oak said many seniors "gradually become poor—illness, home repairs, inflation, property taxes." He called for "thousands of low-cost rental apartments, tax free."

MARTHA KRIEGER, instructor in the Harlan School District in New Berlin, said the number of senior citizens taking high school work has grown in the last 2½ years from 30 to 230.

"The metric system is about to descend on them," she said. "No-fault insurance is new. Such education is an alternative to institutionalization."

Paul Brunson, a social worker in Macomb County, called Gov. William Milliken's budget cuts "defunctual" and "unjust" because they impact on the aged and disabled.

Sen. Snyder said, "We have available \$2.2 billion (a year) to spend. We have

requests for \$4 billion." But he urged senior citizens to make their needs known not only to state government but to the federal government, city councils, school boards and county commissions.

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Students who have been previously admitted to the University may register in alphabetical order from 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:30-4:30 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, and 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:30-5 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The alphabetical order for registering will be waived during the final week of registration beginning March 1.

A schedule of classes and further information may be obtained by calling WSU at 87-8811. Spring quarter classes will open on Monday, April 5.

Records of Continuing Education Units (CEU) earned will be kept at Mercy College of Detroit.

For Information and Registration call or write:

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