



Lawmakers Request Funding For Home Care Services

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\$315 million. That's the shortfall for the state program that provides in-home services for seniors. Lawmakers plan to request additional funding to keep the community care program running for the remaining 2.5 months of the budget year.

A Democratic lawmaker confirmed she plans to file a request for an additional \$315 million for the community care program in the next few days.

The demand for the program is on the rise as baby boomers age. It funds home care, including help with laundry and cooking, for about 80,000 seniors.

Rep. Sara Feigenholtz said the state didn't distribute enough money to community care to account for the growth two years in a row.

Dozens of seniors and church leaders walked the halls of the Capitol, urging lawmakers to maintain the program. But one Republican said he isn't sure he can approve the funding.

"I think that's an important program that we provide for our seniors, and we need to be able to continue that," Rep. Wayne Rosenthal (R - Litchfield) said. "But there's a lot of other demands on resources out there and we need to divide that."

"It's an extraordinarily valuable service," Feigenholtz said. "If we don't pay these bills, we're going to hear the doors of the providers in Illinois close very quietly."

We talked with one of the women lobbying lawmakers for the funding today. She said the program gives people like her the chance to feel independent.

Feigenholtz said she'll propose reforms for the community care program to make it more efficient and control costs.

In other state government news, the state's highest court will hear an appeal to a ruling that finds healthcare for state government retirees isn't a right. The retirees' attorney, Don Craven, confirmed the Illinois Supreme Court will hear the appeal.

Earlier this month, a Sangamon County circuit judge ruled healthcare isn't protected under state law. It's been 92 days since the new general assembly was sworn into office, and still no pension reform.