

Governor Christie's Record of Protecting and Caring for Seniors

Governor Christie's FY2012 Budget reaffirms his commitment to seniors, building upon a proven record of compassion toward our Greatest Generation.

While the Democrats' budget rhetoric remains on repeat as the Assembly Budget Committee holds their second hearing this week, Governor Christie's FY2012 Budget maintains fiscal discipline while prioritizing and funding core priorities to assist New Jersey's seniors. Legislative Democrats may find it more convenient to distort the facts for election year political gain, but the numbers are clear – Governor Christie has consistently provided resources to fund services supporting our seniors.

Homestead Benefits and Senior Freeze Program

Governor Christie's FY 2012 Budget doubles Homestead Benefits in FY 2012 for New Jerseyans, providing direct property relief applied as a straight credit against homeowners' property tax bills, and increased funding for the Senior Freeze property tax relief program by \$90 million:

- Homestead Benefits will be applied directly as a credit that reduces homeowners' property tax bills again this year, at double the level of last year;
- Senior and disabled homeowners with total income up to \$150,000 will receive Homestead Benefit credits averaging \$540.
- Senior Freeze checks to senior and disabled homeowners **are already in the mail**. Checks for the Senior Freeze program, which protects senior citizens and disabled residents from increases in property taxes, will average more than \$1,200 this year, going directly to recipients who earned \$70,000 or less in 2009 and 2010;
- Every individual who qualifies for the Senior Freeze program will receive a benefit this year.

Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD)/ Senior Gold

- The budget fully funds the PAAD and Senior Gold pharmaceutical assistance programs without increases in co-pays or changes in eligibility.
 - Approximately 160,000 low-income seniors receive financial assistance with life-saving medications.
 - The state continues to achieve savings by coordinating with the federal government on its Medicare Part D drug assistance programs.
- New Jersey's PAAD program remains one of the nation's most generous senior pharmaceutical assistance programs.

Expanding Home and Community-Based Services for Seniors

- The budget affirms the Governor's commitment to expand efforts to allow seniors to safely age in their homes or transition from nursing homes back into the community with home care supportive services.
 - The budget increases funding for home and community-based services by \$47.6 million.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps

- 81,174 New Jersey seniors are currently receiving SNAP (food stamp) assistance.
- The Department of Health and Senior Services and the Department of Human Services have partnered to match data from seniors eligible/enrolled in PAAD with NJ SNAP for outreach/enrollment.
- The two Departments are reaching out to more than 140,000 seniors in the PAAD program to let them know that they may qualify for food stamps.