

**New York City Council  
Committee on Aging, Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair  
Oversight Hearing on Supporting Unpaid Caregivers  
November 29, 2017**

LiveOn NY thanks Chair of the Committee on Aging, Council Member Margaret Chin, and the entire Committee for holding this hearing on supporting unpaid caregivers in New York City.

LiveOn NY also thanks Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Finance Chair Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Aging Chair Margaret Chin, and Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado for the critical investment of \$4 million to the newly created Caregiving program in FY18. We are appreciative of all of the work done to make FY18 “the Year of the Senior” with an investment of \$22 million to the Department for the Aging and we look forward to continuing these much needed gains in the year to come.

The Department for the Aging recently released “A Survey of Informal Caregivers in New York City” as required by Local Law 97 passed in 2016. The study highlights the difficulties that the estimated 1.3 million unpaid caregivers in New York City experience on a daily basis<sup>1</sup>. From lost earnings to a lack of information about available services, unpaid caregivers, a majority of whom are women, continue to need increased support and resources. More than half of caregivers studied provide at least 30 hours of care each week, and 3 out of 4 caregivers of older adults were over 55 themselves.

It is important to note that these caregivers not only support their loved ones, but New York State benefits an estimated \$32 billion annually from these unpaid services<sup>2</sup>. Further, 28% of grandparents in New York City are responsible for raising grandchildren, which significantly alleviates strains on the foster care system and helps to develop the city’s youth.<sup>3</sup> While caregivers are economically supporting the city and state, they are often struggling themselves financially, physically, and emotionally. More can be done to support these invaluable caregivers who reside in every district and make up every race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Beyond unpaid caregivers, who make up the unseen workforce supporting New York City’s most vulnerable, is a network of services that also provides care, support, and prevention services to seniors. The entire network of services funded by the Department for the Aging are caregiving mechanisms themselves that act as resources and options for unpaid caregivers and their loved ones. For example, social adult day programs offer peace of mind that a senior is looked after in a safe environment so a loved one can remain a part of the workforce; home-delivered meals support homebound seniors who may have nowhere else to turn for a nutritious meal; case management and home care can help a senior avoid the costly move to a nursing home by providing needed assistance with bathing and household chores. The list goes on as senior centers, NORCs, transportation services, and the entirety of the programs funded by the Department for the Aging serve a critical and cost-effective role of supporting New York’s older adults.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for the Aging, “A Survey of Informal Caregivers in New York City”, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> AARP, 2011

<sup>3</sup> Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013



Making New York a better place to age

With the solvency of the entire system at risk, and a growing population of seniors, it is critical that the administration and City Council continue to invest in, and baseline, these proven effective aging programs and supports specific to caregivers themselves. LiveOn NY supports a fair and equitable budget that supports seniors of all backgrounds in a culturally competent, respectful, and accessible manner.

We look forward to working with our elected officials to ensure that senior and caregiving issues remain a priority and are invested in as such in the coming fiscal year. Thank you again to the New York City Council and the Committee on Aging for the opportunity to testify on the needs of unpaid caregivers.