

# THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

OCEAN COUNTY  
TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08754-2191

Joseph H. Vicari  
Freeholder



(732) 929-2002  
Fax (732) 505-1918

February 25, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the deadline for the Sequester approaches, I am writing to seek your help in preventing severe cuts to our Nutrition Program for the Elderly in Ocean County, New Jersey.

The Ocean County Office of Senior Services (Area Agency on Aging/AAA) administers a comprehensive, accessible system of community-based services to the elderly in Ocean County throughout Ocean County providing Community Support, Home Support, Nutrition Support and extensive Access Services.

Ocean County continues to have the largest percentage of seniors of any county in the state of New Jersey and ranks high in the nation. Ocean County's population of 65 plus is 21 percent compared to New Jersey's, which is 13.5 percent and Florida at 17.5 percent. The fastest growing segment in Ocean County is the 85+ age group.

The forecasted 10% cut in services will result in a reduction of over 53,000 units of support services such as transportation, home care, caregiver services, fixit programs, benefits assistance, adult protective services, etc. We would need to cut **26,000** meals in Ocean County when we already have a wait list of almost **200** people for home delivered meals.

Never has a warm, nutritious meal delivered with a friendly smile and a caring heart been more appreciated by so many of our Ocean County elderly than this past season when Hurricane Sandy hit.

In addition to the hot meal, shelf-stable meals were delivered in advance of the hurricane and regular meal delivery resumed just two days after the hurricane hit. Home Delivered Meals drivers were treated as heroes as people received their meals. Although, the nutrition sites on the two (2) barrier islands were closed, operations resumed at most of the other sites within a few days. These nutrition sites served as a warm place to share a meal and a story during the post storm power outages. Making certain our seniors received proper nutrition in addition to having contact with caring individuals continued to be a priority throughout the emergency.

Ocean County is in the recovery phase of Super Storm Sandy; of the **52,877** FEMA applications already filed, **15,865** are senior citizens. This is the worst possible time for Older Americans Act programs to be cut when so many older adults and their families are counting on our support while county and local governments are reeling from the recovery costs.

According to our Annual Nutrition Screening findings, **65%** of our Home Delivered Meals clients are at High Nutritional Risk. Since the Nutrition Program for the Elderly helps to sustain so many of our frail and vulnerable residents, I implore you to take the necessary measures to **waive** this vital program from the effects of Sequestration, so this lifeline to the elderly continues.

Sincerely,



Joseph H. Vicari  
Freeholder Chairman, Senior Services

DJM/JHV/sk

cc: Ocean County Senior Advisory Council Members  
D. Jane Maloney, Director of Senior Services