

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Children and Families Committee

BILL: SB 1722

SPONSOR: Senator Fasano

SUBJECT: Multiservice Senior Centers

DATE: March 18, 2005

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Collins	Whiddon	CF	Favorable
2.			HE	
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

Senate Bill 1722 expands the definition of “multiservice senior center” and further specifies the purpose of these centers. The bill provides that a multiservice senior center is:

- A focal point for the organization and provision of a broad spectrum of services suited to the diverse needs and interests of independent older persons;
- An entity authorized to partner with an aging resource center in order to provide easier access to long-term care services by seniors and their families who reside within the local community; and
- A setting that provides opportunities that enable participants to stay connected to their communities and support networks.

The bill also provides that the multiservice senior center is designed to offer preventive screenings, activities, and services that may divert seniors from more extensive in-home services and to help reduce, delay, or prevent premature institutionalization, as well as, promote easy access and use by seniors who have varying levels of physical abilities. Multiservice senior centers are encouraged to seek national accreditation by the National Institute of Senior Centers.

This bill creates section 430.901 and amends ss 430.206, 430.203, and 430.205 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

A “multiservice senior center” is defined by s. 430.203(10), F.S., as a community facility for the organization and provision of a broad spectrum of services, which shall include provision of health, including mental health, social, nutritional, and educational services, and the provision of facilities for recreational activities for persons 60 years of age or older. It is further specified in s.

430.206, F.S., that if practicable, multiservice senior center services shall be available to functionally impaired elder persons, and must be centrally located if it is feasible.

Senior centers offer programs and services for older adults, within local communities, that are designed to assist independent older adults in remaining active and healthy. Services and programs are typically provided in five main categories including health (including mental health), social, nutritional, educational and recreational. Depending upon the community, senior centers vary in their hours of operation as well as the types of programs that are offered.

The best models of senior centers offer a wide variety of programming that attract participants of many ages and economic backgrounds, involve many community partners, and engage participants in the centers' planning and curriculum selection. Accreditation is the official recognition that a senior center is meeting its mission in a nationally accepted professional fashion. Accreditation is based on a senior center's compliance with nine standards of operation and is provided by the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC), a unit of the National Council on Aging. National accreditation has been awarded to 114 senior centers across the United States with 90 of these centers being located in Florida.¹

The U.S. Administration on Aging estimates that there are currently anywhere from 10,000 to 16,000 senior centers across the country. About 260 of these centers are located in Florida. These senior centers are operated by a variety of host organizations, such as private non-profit organizations, municipal governments, county governments, and other types of organizations. It has been estimated that as many as 380,000 older Floridians visit these centers annually.²

Benefits of Senior Centers

A study involving 734 senior center participants from seven states, including Florida, found that the majority of senior center participants credit senior center programming with improving mental and physical health, and three-fourths specify that the center has helped them remain independent.³ Friendships that are developed through participation at senior centers provide for the development of a support network that help older individuals to maintain independence.

Issues

For the past several years, the Florida Association of Senior Centers has encouraged the inclusion of a more appropriate definition of senior centers in Florida statute that applies to all senior centers. In 2004, the definition of a multiservice senior center was revised in s. 430.203(10), F.S., to more closely resemble the definition that is provided by the Older Americans Act. However, the statutory placement of the definition assigns it within the "Community Care for the Elderly Act," which targets functionally impaired elders. Concern has been expressed that the current placement does not clearly reflect the range of services and programs that are provided by senior centers.

¹ Constituent Groups: NISC Accreditation, The National Council on Aging, <http://206.112.84.147/content.cfm?sectionID=131>.

² About Florida's Senior Centers, the Department of Elder Affairs, <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/english/SeniorCenter/seniorCenter.html>.

³ Florida's Senior Centers, Bringing the Picture Into Focus, Results of the 2004 Profile Study (p. 7), Florida Association of Senior Centers & The Department of Elder Affairs.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Senate Bill 1722 amends s. 430.203(10), F.S., deleting the current definition for “multiservice senior center” and creates s. 430.901, F.S., providing a more comprehensive definition for the term as well as specifying the purpose of these centers.

The bill provides that a multiservice senior center is:

- A highly visible focal point for the organization and provision of a broad spectrum of services suited to the diverse needs and interests of independent older persons, which may include nutritional meals, health, mental health, social, wellness, respite care, education services, and recreational activities;
- An entity authorized to partner with an aging resource center to provide for easier access to long-term care services by seniors and their families who reside within the local community; and
- A setting that provides opportunities that enable participants to stay connected to their communities and support networks.

The bill also provides that the multiservice senior center is designed:

- To offer preventive screenings, activities, and services that may divert seniors from more extensive in-home services and help reduce, delay, or prevent premature institutionalization; and
- For ease of access and use by seniors with varying levels of physical abilities.

This bill additionally renumbers and amends s. 430.902, F.S., to provide that multiservice senior service centers should, rather than must, be centrally located, and to encourage the centers to seek national accreditation by the National Institute of Senior Centers. Section 430.205(2), F.S., is amended to reference the newly created s. 430.901, F.S.

By expanding the definition of multiservice senior centers, specifying the purpose of these centers, and placing the definition in a new section of ch. 430, F.S., SB 1722 helps to better distinguish well-elder services from those provided for frail elders, and more clearly reflects the range of services and programs that are provided by multiservice senior centers.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None

C. Government Sector Impact:

None

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

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