



BUDGET CUTS WILL HIT: Health & Human Services

The work of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is critical to every member of the Arlington community in protecting the public health and safety of Arlington residents and promoting safe and sanitary living conditions. DHHS oversees the Health Department, the Council on Aging, the Arlington Youth Counseling Center and the Veteran's Services Office.

Among the things for which DHHS is responsible are:

- running vaccination clinics including influenza, pneumonia, shingles
- inspecting local restaurants and other food establishments and conducting foodborne illness investigations
- investigating resident complaints related to any health issue ranging from trash and dumpster complaints to housing code violations
- helping elderly residents continue to live dignified, independent lives by offering advocacy and support services including social services, nursing services, case management, advocacy services and navigation of government programs
- providing direct mental health counseling to Arlington youth and families on issues including substance abuse, bullying, anxiety, depression, and behavioral difficulties
- serving veterans by providing direct aid and assistance to veterans and their dependents.

Without an override, the DHHS will have to:

- ***Eliminate a half-time health inspector position in the Health Department.*** Arlington is seeing an increase in the number of housing condemnations and nuisance health conditions. Cutting the health inspector position will result in fewer inspections and strain DHHS' ability to respond promptly to disease control and environmental health issues.
- ***Reduce social services available to Arlington's elderly.*** DHHS will be unable to fill a position for a half-time social worker whose role is to help seniors obtain needed services such as fuel assistance, food pantry, health care and housing.
- ***Limit counseling services to youth and families in need.*** DHHS has modified the way that it provides counseling services to youth and their families by moving to a fee-for-service system, with the services billed to insurance companies. DHHS will have to forego providing services that are not billable, such as coordinating with other professionals involved in the youth's life (teacher, probation officer, employer).

With an override, the DHHS can:

- ***Restore the part-time health inspector position.*** DHHS will reinstate the health inspector position, which will enable the agency to conduct the mandated number of restaurant inspections and investigate housing complaints more consistently and quickly.
- ***Hire a part-time social worker to help the elderly.*** Before losing funding for the position, the social worker was able to work directly with seniors in need, helping them to obtain fuel assistance, food, transportation to medical appointments, health care and housing.
- ***Better meet the needs of troubled youth and their families.*** With additional funding, the department will be able to better meet the needs of families in crisis.

It's up to us. Vote Yes on June 7.