

Legislative Position Statement Arizona HB 2217 TPT; Diapers; Formula; Feminine Hygiene

Pima Council on Aging supports the passage of HB 2217, exempting from state sales tax diapers, formula, feminine hygiene, and incontinence supplies.

Incontinence is a significant issue for older adults. It can be caused by any number of physical or health conditions, and can lead to poor hygiene, depression and anxiety, and social isolation, which have severe impacts on an older adult's quality of life. Lack of access to adequate incontinent supplies compounds these issues.

Medicare doesn't cover incontinence supplies or adult diapers. Older people living on fixed incomes frequently have to choose between basic costs of living, lifesaving medications, and less critical necessities like incontinence supplies.

Inadequate supplies can cause individuals to withdraw from social situations due to embarrassment or fear of accidents, leading many incontinent older people, especially those with few resources, to live in isolation. Researchers have determined that loneliness might be a more significant health factor for people over 65 than obesity, smoking, exercise or nutrition.

The annual cost of purchasing incontinence supplies for an older adult with a significant issue can easily run \$2,000-3,000, which means the Arizona sales tax at 5.6% can add up to as much as \$168 per year. For someone living at the poverty line (\$12,060 per year), the tax on these products alone equates to 1.4% of their annual income. Many older people live on less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Pima Council on Aging, in partnership with the Diaper Bank of Southern Arizona, distributes a small number of incontinence supplies to older adults with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level, but this program meets only a fraction of the need. On average, Pima Council on Aging delivers 40 diapers per month to an individual in need, and served 172 people in 2017.

According to a 2014 study of people 65 and older by the United State Centers for Disease Control, half of all older adults experience some degree of incontinence, and 25% had moderate, severe or very severe issues. Using the statistical information from the CDC, PCOA can estimate that approximately 124,238 older adults within Pima County rely on some form of incontinence supplies.

Currently, incontinence supplies are taxed as a luxury item. HB 2217 correctly reclassifies these items as basic necessities.

Pima Council on Aging urges legislators to vote for HB 2217.



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and Southern Arizona
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