

Harrisburg, Pa. (PRCN, May 06, 2008) – A new report – from a coalition of advocates for older Americans – says that one in four older Pennsylvania residents relies on Social Security as their only income. It may not be enough.

The Elder Economic Security Initiative report is essentially a calculator that gives county-by-county information on how much money seniors need to live well -- and age at home.

The average Social Security payment in Pennsylvania is below what is needed to cover basic needs.

Carol Goertzel is president of PathWays PA, a service organization that advocates for low-income women and families.

Goertzel says – as example – in 2007 the average Social Security payment in Dauphin County was about \$11,400. She says that’s just 62% of what a senior needs to cover daily expenses.

Goertzel says the problem is the same across the Commonwealth.

“I would have thought there would be somewhere where on Social Security a senior could live and pay her rent or housing costs or food, transportation and health care. I think that was one of the biggest surprises to me it’s simply not true anywhere.”

Goertzel says using the Federal Poverty Level as an indicator underestimates the amount of money seniors need to be economically secure. She says social services groups and lawmakers can use the new calculator to more realistically plan programs and benefits for Pennsylvania’s aging population.