



Barbara Needham, Addus HealthCare, Agency Director, Peoria, IL sitting on left with client Clara Betts.

## **WEEK News 25 Peoria Illinois**

# **Group Wants Fairness in State Budget Cuts**

*Originally printed at <http://www.centralillinoisnewscenter.com/home/117548728.html>*

By WEEK Producer

By Denise Jackson

March 7, 2011

Local human service providers say they want more fairness from the state as it tries to get through its debt crisis.

They say under some of the cuts proposed programs benefiting thousands of senior citizens could be put into jeopardy.

Eighty seven year old Clara Betts is legally blind but lives by herself in her Chillicothe apartment. Seven days a week Betts gets help with cleaning, cooking and shopping from a homemaker from Addus Healthcare. But state budget cuts could limit the program to Medicaid recipients only...forcing Betts out of it.

"You know where I'd be probably in the nursing home. I have two daughters, one lives in Iowa and is very busy the other lives here and is a Special Ed teacher," Betts said.

Right now the state owes Betts' employer Addus Healthcare 30 million dollars for services. Addus and other social service providers say debt restructuring like that under consideration in Senate Bill 3 would help get the state back on track paying its bills.

"They must show leadership in helping to craft and pass a plan that gets the job done for constituents," said Addus Healthcare Director Barb Needham.

Addus is part of the statewide collaboration "Illinois Partners for Human Service" . that is forming councils in cities and towns around the state in hopes of getting equity on budget cuts.

"If there's equity I think you're going to find that those of us who provide services in the state who recognize that some of those cuts have to land on us will be much more willing to tighten our belt to share in that sacrifice," said Illinois Partners for Human Service Member Jim Runyon.

It's a sacrifice they hope will not come at the expense of programs like community care which Clara Betts depends upon.

"It's nice to have some to eat lunch with you," she says.