For Immediate Release
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Contact: Angela Smith-Dieng, Executive Director, Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 802-578-7094, angela@vermont4a.org.

Vermont Agencies on Aging Announce Over 814,000 Meals Delivered to Seniors in 2015
Need is growing across the state; more funding is needed for this critical nutrition program

March 7, 2016 (Shelburne, VT) – March is National Nutrition Month and also the 14th annual "March for Meals," a nationwide campaign coordinated by Meals on Wheels America to honor and raise funds for this vital safety net program. In 2015, 815,000 meals were delivered to seniors across Vermont through the Meals on Wheels program, a public-private partnership that combines federal, state and local funding with the hard work and dedication of Vermont's Area Agencies on Aging, community partners, and thousands of volunteers across the state. That's an increase of 30,000 meals from the previous year.

Meals on Wheels is designed to supplement the nutrition of people age 60 and over and adults with disabilities who face challenges in preparing healthy, adequate meals due to situations such as advanced age, hospital recovery, illness, or physical disability. National Nutrition Month is the perfect time to focus on the importance of home delivered meals, since research shows the program improves health outcomes for frail and vulnerable seniors as well as alleviates isolation and hunger. In fact, Governor Peter Shumlin has declared March 2016 as "March for Meals" month, acknowledging the vital role that Meals on Wheels plays for our neighbors and our communities. Not only do these daily meals fight hunger, malnutrition, falls and chronic disease, they also save tax payer dollars. The cost of one year to receive Meals on Wheels is less than one day in a hospital.

While the Agencies on Aging and our partners were able to deliver 5,000 seniors home delivered meals last year, over 17,000 seniors remain threatened by hunger in Vermont. Need is growing each year: 30% more meals were delivered in 2015 than in 2005. Yet federal funding for the program remains stagnant, and agencies struggle to meet the demand, with some on the verge of creating regional waiting lists. V4A is urging the legislature to help address the growing need by contributing funds through the state waiver that helps keep seniors at home. This would be an important investment in serving vulnerable Vermonters and saving healthcare dollars.

To learn more and donate to your local Meals on Wheels program, call the Vermont Senior HelpLine at 1-800-642-5119.

About the Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A)
For over forty years, Vermont's five Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) have been working to provide services and supports to vulnerable older adults with the vision that every Vermonter deserves to age with health, independence and dignity. V4A works to support the agencies by strengthening their collaboration, broadening awareness of their impact, and advocating for

their essential programs and services. To connect to your local AAA, visit
www.vermontseniors.org

About Meals on Wheels America
Meals on Wheels America is the oldest and largest national organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based senior nutrition programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior hunger and isolation. This network exists in virtually every community in America and, along with more than two million volunteers, delivers the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks that enable America's seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity. By providing funding, leadership, research, education and advocacy support, Meals on Wheels America empowers its local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time. For more information, or to find a Meals on Wheels provider near you, visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org.