



April/May 2004

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Message from the Assistant Secretary: Spotlight on Prevention

Our nation is in the midst of a boom in the aging population. As we make the transition to an aging society, we need to do everything we can to help people remain active and healthy as they age. This one reason why the President and Secretary Thompson have made prevention one of their top priorities and why I included it as a priority in AoA's 5 Year Strategic Plan. Our prevention strategy is focused on increasing the capacity of the aging services network to deliver education campaigns and programs that have proven to be effective in reducing the risk of disease and disability among the elderly. Toward this end, last year we launched our Evidence-Based Prevention Grants Program in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute on Aging, and the Robert Wood Johnson, John A. Hartford and Horizon foundations. We funded 12 community demonstration projects and a national technical assistance center on prevention under this new program. AoA and CDC also funded 14 state mini grant programs to encourage state aging offices and health departments to collaborate on evidence-based prevention projects.

I've just announced a new outreach campaign to help older Americans make healthier lifestyle choices. The *You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging* campaign is the aging component of the *Steps to a HealthierUS* Initiative. For this reason, I announced several aspects of this campaign on April 30 at the Second Annual *Steps to HealthierUS* Summit. The *You Can!* campaign is designed to increase the number of older adults who are active and healthy by using a partnership approach to mobilize communities. Together, we will create public awareness and make programs available to help older Americans improve their nutrition and increase their physical activity. This summer I will be inviting your organization to consider becoming a *You Can!* partner to enable us to work together to promote healthier lifestyles and address the current chronic disease epidemic. For more information about the campaign visit: www.aoa.gov/youcan.

Josefina G. Carbonell

New Collaboration to Help Low-Income Medicare Beneficiaries Sign Up for Drug Discount Card

On May 27, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced an initiative that will target enrolling low-income seniors and persons with disabilities in the Medicare-approved drug discount card program. While the Medicare-approved drug discount card program provides savings for all participants, seniors and persons with disabilities who qualify for the \$1,200 credit -- \$600 in 2004 and \$600 in 2005 -- will reap the greatest benefits. To help in the enrollment effort, HHS is making an additional \$4.6 million available to organize and fund community-based organizations to help low-income beneficiaries learn about the Medicare drug discount card program and how to enroll. These funds are in addition to the \$21 million previously made available to the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs, which provide one-on-one assistance to Medicare beneficiaries through trained volunteer counselors who are provided training from CMS.

AoA and Indian Health Service are reaching out to their constituencies to encourage older adults to sign up for the program. Analysis by CMS shows that seniors and people with disabilities can expect discounts of up to 18 percent off average retail prices for name brand drugs and discounts of between 30 and 60 percent on generic drugs. Mail order and Internet discounts through the cards offers savings of up to 24 percent from comparable services. AoA is directing \$2 million to complement these efforts to educate and enroll beneficiaries. AoA will work through its national network of local community-based organizations to target hard-to-reach, rural, disabled and non-English-speaking beneficiaries. A list of the card sponsors and the affiliated drug manufacturers is available at

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarerereform/drugcard/mfragreements.asp>.)

Medicare beneficiaries can call 1-800-MEDICARE or log onto www.medicare.gov with their zip code, list of drugs and dosages, and income, and CMS will help them get substantial savings. For further information visit:

<http://www.dhhs.gov/news/press/2004pres/20040527.html>.

FDA Proposes Action Plan to Confront Nation's Obesity Problem

Since the late 1980s, adult obesity has steadily increased in this country. About 64 percent of Americans are overweight and more than 30 percent are obese. To help tackle the "nation's obesity epidemic," the Food and Drug Administration released the final report of its Obesity Working Group on March 12, 2004. The group's long- and short-term proposals are based on the scientific fact that weight control is mainly a function of caloric balance. That is, calories in must equal calories out. So FDA is focusing on "calories count" as the basis of its actions and the message of its obesity campaign.

Recommended actions include:

- enhancing the food label to display calorie count more prominently and to use meaningful serving sizes;

- initiating a consumer education campaign focusing on the "Calories Count" message;
- encouraging restaurants to provide nutrition information to consumers;
- stepping up enforcement actions concerning accuracy of food labels;
- revising FDA guidance for developing drugs to treat obesity; and
- working cooperatively with other government agencies, non-profits, industry, and academia on obesity research.

The full report from the FDA's obesity working group is available at

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/obesity/>.

More information about HHS' new anti-obesity campaign and NIH's obesity research agenda is available at

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2004pres/20040309.html>.

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For the full issue of the April/May AoA e-news visit: (url to be inserted here).

AoA News

AoA Celebrates Older American's Month

AoA's celebration of Older American's Month has been in full swing. AoA selected the theme for Older Americans Month 2004 "Aging Well, Living Well" to celebrate and recognize older Americans who are living longer, healthier, and more productive lives. Older persons are not only adding years to their lives, they are also improving the quality of their lives. We have been celebrating Older American's Month in a number of ways. This year AoA introduced a national photography contest. We developed the Older Americans Month 2004 Photography Contest to enhance the image of older Americans through pictures. Also, AoA is spotlighting programs in local communities around this country that assist older Americans in their quest to age and live well as part of its Program Champion initiative. AoA also has participated in a number of local and national events to celebration the month. Older Americans Month materials are located on the AoA website and include a poster, logo, sample proclamation, and fact sheets. A gallery of all the photographs, including the winning entries, can be viewed on the AoA website at http://www.aoa.gov/press/oam/May_2004/photo_contest/photo_contest.asp. For more information go to: <http://www.aoa.gov/press/oam/oam.asp>.

12 Additional States Receive Aging and Disability Resource Center Grants

On April 16 HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson announced 12 grants totaling nearly \$9 million to support state efforts to create "one-stop" centers to streamline access to long-term care. These new grants represent the second round of funding of Aging and Disability Resource Center Programs based on applications submitted in response to a FY 2003 Program Announcement. This joint Administration on Aging and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Initiative has now funded twenty-four states to integrate their long-term support resources for consumers into a single coordinated system. The recently announced grants are being awarded to state/territorial agencies in Alaska, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, New Mexico, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, and Wisconsin. For more information visit: http://www.aoa.gov/press/pr/2004/04_Apr/aoa-cms0416041.pdf.

Policy and Program Updates

HHS Announces Blueprint for Action at 2nd National *Steps to a HealthierUS* Summit

HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced a Blueprint for Action to reduce and prevent chronic diseases at the 2nd national *Steps to a HealthierUS* Summit on April 29 in Baltimore, Maryland. The Blueprint outlines steps that individuals, groups, communities, and other organizations can take to help improve the overall health of Americans. The summit brought together representatives of federal, state, and local governments, providers and practitioners, educators, policy makers, community and industry leaders. It built on President Bush's *HealthierUS* Initiative addressing the key areas of physical activity, nutrition, preventive screenings, and making healthy choices. The summit provided tangible ways for participants to make a difference in

their own states and communities. For more information go to <http://asp.hhs.gov/health/blueprint> or to <http://www.healthierus.gov/steps/>.

Five Year Strategic Plan to Address Health Disparities

The National Institute on Aging has developed a 5-year Strategic Plan to Address Health Disparities In Seniors. The NIA plan focuses on three major areas: 1) research; 2) research infrastructure; and 3) public information, outreach and education, and includes ongoing and future initiatives. The plan is composed of more than sixty activities to help the NIA advance research and better understand health disparities among ethnic and racial older adults. A copy of the report is found at: <http://www.nia.nih.gov/strat-planhd/2000-2005/1.htm>. For further information about the plan contact Dr. Hardin Taylor at HardinT@nia.nih.gov.

Out of Stock FDA Nutrition Brochures Available Online

Thank you for an outstanding response to the Assistant Secretary's letter to State and Area Agencies on Aging announcing National Nutrition Month consumer brochures available from the Food and Drug Administration. Because of an overwhelming response, the brochures *Growing Older, Eating Better, Eating for a Healthy Heart* and *Keep Your Food Safe* are now out of stock. The brochures can be downloaded at <http://www.fda.gov/opacom/catalog/alpha.html>. **Please note that hard copies of these brochures are No Longer Available.**

Vision Loss from Eye Diseases Will Increase as Americans Age

With the aging of the population, the number of Americans with major eye diseases is increasing, and vision loss is becoming a major public health problem. By the year 2020, the number of people who are blind or have low vision is projected to increase substantially. These findings appear in the April issue of *Archives of Ophthalmology*. Blindness or low vision affects 3.3 million Americans age 40 and over, or one in 28, according to study authors. This figure is projected to reach 5.5 million by the year 2020. The study reports that low vision and blindness increase significantly with age, particularly in people over age 65. People 80 years of age and older currently make up eight percent of the population, but account for 69 percent of blindness. The study provides the most robust and up-to-date estimates available about the burden of visual impairment. It was sponsored by the National Eye Institute, part of the Federal government's National Institutes of Health. For more information, go to www.nei.nih.gov/eyedata/.

Study Identifies Predictors of Alzheimer's Disease Longevity

Among the first questions asked after someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease is: "What can we expect?" It's a tough question that has been difficult to answer. A new study suggests that assessing several key clinical aspects of the disease soon after diagnosis could help families and physicians better predict long-term survival in individuals with Alzheimer's Disease. These insights also could help public health officials refine cost projections and plan services for the growing number of older Americans at risk for the disease. The study, funded by the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health, appeared in the April 6, 2004 issue of the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*. <http://nia.nih.gov/news/pr/2004/040504.htm>.

Who's DUN it?

Beginning in FY2004, all federal grant applicants are required to be a part of the Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System in order to improve the statistical reporting of Federal grants. Receiving a DUNS number is easy and it's FREE!! Beat the rush and be ready for those upcoming federal grant opportunities. Get your DUNS number now and then you can say "I've DUN it!!"

Call 1-866-705-5711 or apply for your DUNS number online at:

<https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions.html?cmid=EOE100537>.

Changes to Audit Thresholds for Federal Grantees

The threshold has been raised for determining whether a non-federal entity receiving Federal awards is required to have an audit performed in compliance with OMB Circular A-133. Previously non-federal entities that expended \$300,000 or more in a year were to have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year. The new threshold, triggering the requirement for an audit, has been increased to \$500,000. Further, OMB has raised the threshold at which a recipient of Federal awards must have a cognizance agency designated. Previously, recipients expending more than \$25,000,000 in federal awards a year were to have a cognizant Federal agency designated to perform various responsibilities required under OMB Circular A-133. The new threshold for agency cognizance is \$50,000,000. On June 27, 2003, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published these changes to OMB Circular Number A-133, Audits of states, local governments, and non-profit organizations. The revisions are effective for grant recipient fiscal years ending after December 31, 2003. If you have questions, please contact the Office of Audit Resolution and Cost Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at 202-401-2811. More information on these changes and the requirements in OMB Circular A-133 can be found at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133/a133.html>.

Grantee Spotlight

Easter Seals Receives Award from *Today's Caregiver* Magazine

Today's Caregiver magazine recently announced the winners of the 2004 *Today's Caregiver* magazine and caregiver.com CAREGIVER FRIENDLY Awards. The awards are presented to books, media, services, and products that have been produced in the last calendar year with the interests of the family caregiver in mind. The award winners were honored at the Fearless Caregiver Conference with Leeza Gibbons in Fort Lauderdale Florida on April 29th. Easter Seals is among the award winners and has received this award for the transportation video they produced for caregivers under their grant from AoA. Other award winners are Last Acts, Area Agency on aging of North Central Texas, Dallas and Tarrant counties, SeniorNavigator.com, and Ceridian. For more information go to: www.caregiver.com.

Of Interest

Funding Opportunity to Protect Environmental Health of Older Adults

On April 16, 2004, the Environmental Protection Agency announced a new funding opportunity for training, innovation, outreach, and educational projects to protect the environmental health of older adults. Eligible applicants include state, local and tribal governments including environmental, health and aging departments, and academic

institutions and non-profit organizations. A total of approximately \$200,000 is available to fund eight to 15 projects. The pre-application deadline for this funding opportunity is Monday, June 28, 2004. For complete information about this new opportunity to help protect the environmental health of America's aging population, visit <http://www.epa.gov/aging/grants/index.htm> or <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2004/April/Day-16/g8678.htm>. Send questions about this funding opportunity to aging.info@epa.gov. To learn more about EPA's efforts to protect the health of older adults, visit the Aging Initiative website at <http://www.epa.gov/aging>.

Updated Medicine Use Information for Older Adults

As many people age, they are faced with health problems that may need to be treated with the regular use of medicine. And with the normal body changes caused by aging, the likelihood of potential problems with medicines increases for many seniors. With this in mind, the Council on Family Health has updated *Medicines and You: A Guide for Older Adults* – its educational guide for older adults about safe and responsible medicine use. The revised guide, which is also available in Spanish, is being distributed in cooperation with FDA and AoA. *Medicines and You*, first published by CFH in 1991, provides practical information for older adults about the use of prescription and nonprescription medicines. The educational guide gives facts about drug interactions, tips for talking to healthcare professionals, and ways older adults can help lower their medicine costs. The 17-page guide also features “My Medicine Record,” a chart on which older adults can list the medicines they take and other important health information. For a free copy of *Medicines and You: A Guide for Older Adults* (please specify English or Spanish), write to - FDA/MEDYOU, PSC Personal Property Facility, 16071 Industrial Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20877; send an email request to dpapubs@cder.fda.gov or call AoA's Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116. To view a pdf version of the guide online, go to http://www.cfhinfo.org/PDFs/MedicinesandYou_English.pdf. For more information go to: www.cfhinfo.org.

Resources to Help Improve Transportation Coordination

In our continued efforts to implement the President's Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination issued on February 24, 2004 with our federal partners, AoA would like to make sure you are aware of resources that can help you at the state and local level improve your level of transportation coordination. The **Framework for Action** is an assessment tool that states and communities can use to identify their current level of coordination and steps to take to improve their coordination efforts. In addition, the Federal Transit Administration recently announced the **State Technical Assistance Ambassadors Program** which links 30 state coordination teams with a national transportation technical assistance expert. The Ambassadors can help state teams build partnerships, benchmark their current level of coordination, and improve their coordination efforts. Contact your AoA Regional Office to get connected to your Ambassador and other transportation coordination technical assistance resources. You can download the Framework at: <http://www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/framework.html>.

Enrollment Open for Osteoarthritis Initiative

Recruitment is in full swing for the Osteoarthritis Initiative, a public-private partnership between the National Institutes of Health and industry that funds a

multi-site contract to create a resource to hasten discovery of biological markers for osteoarthritis. Men and women age 45 and older at risk for developing osteoarthritis and those with early disease are eligible to participate. After an initial screening, four centers around the United States plan to each enroll and follow 1,250 adults for five years (total enrollment of 5,000). The four clinical centers, selected in the summer of 2002, include the University of Maryland School of Medicine/Johns Hopkins University, the Ohio State University Medical Center, the University of Pittsburgh and the Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island/Brown University. For information on the OAI, visit "The OAI: A Knee Health Study" at <http://www.oai.ucsf.edu/clinics.asp>.

For general questions, visit http://www.niams.nih.gov/ne/press/2001/07_17qa.htm. The NIAMS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (301-496-8190) or the NIA Communications Office (301-496-1752) can also be contacted for information.

New Reports on Caregiver Issues Available for Health and Service Providers

On April 9, The National Center on Caregiving at FamilyCaregiver Alliance released two new monographs for health and service providers on significant family caregiving issues. *Navigating the Care System: A Guide for Providers to Help Family Caregivers* traces the development of the sometimes-confusing array of programs and services in the U.S. health and long-term care system, and describes how service providers can help families. It also examines the challenges facing caregivers and offers a list of useful resources available to providers and caregivers. *Cultural Competency in Working with Latino Family Caregivers* outlines the challenges facing service providers in addressing the needs of Latino caregivers. The monograph uses case studies to illustrate how specific cultural characteristics, such as language, customs and religion, can impact caregiving situations, and offers suggestions on ways cultural competency can be improved at organizational and policy levels. To download these monographs go to: <http://www.caregiver.org>.

Issue Brief on Cultural Competence in Health Care

The Center on an Aging Society of Georgetown University has published a recent issue brief examining the importance of cultural competence in health care for people with chronic conditions. The brief includes examples of strategies for moving the health care system toward the goals of improving health outcomes, quality of care, and the elimination or racial and ethnic disparities. To download a copy of this issue brief go to: <http://ihcrp.georgetown.edu/agingsociety/pdfs/cultural.pdf>.

National Eye Institute Web site Update

The National Eye Institute is offering a new interactive online resource designed to help the public find sources of information and support through its Eye Health Organizations Database. For more information go to: <http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/resourceSearch.asp>

Journal Articles Include Key Public Health Messages about Diabetes

The April issue of *Geriatrics* features several articles that include key public health messages about diabetes. The first of these articles discusses how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention translates scientific findings into public health practice and introduces a 4-article series written by CDC experts and external partners that provides an overview of diabetes treatment guidelines among the

aging; the role of psychosocial processes in diabetes management; implementation of diabetes treatment guidelines; and identifying resources for patient education. Look for other articles in Diabetes in the May, June, and July issues of *Geriatrics*. For more information and to view the first of these articles go to:
<http://www.geri.com/geriatrics/>.

AoA e-news information

Archives can be accessed via the AoA web site at:

http://www.aoa.gov/press/enewsletter/archive/enewsletter_archive.asp

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About AoA

AoA works with a nationwide network of organizations and service providers to make support services and resources available to older persons and their caregivers. For more information about AoA, please contact us by mail at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; by phone at (202) 619-0724; by e-mail at aoainfo@aoa.gov; or visit us on the Web at www.aoa.gov.

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