



facilitating access

making it easier for older people to access an integrated array of health and sup

Access to services, especially for those who need them the most, has been a critical priority of AoA and the National Aging Services Network, and the program results illustrate this commitment:

- In FY 2001, over 15 million units of information and assistance and outreach were provided to older Americans.
- In FY 2001, case management services were provided to over 433,000 older people.

Improving access to services for older Americans is an ongoing process. Determining where we need improvement is the first step. We realize that the consumers who use the services can give us the best feedback for improvement so we have asked for their assistance through a consumer assessment survey on information and assistance. We have gained valuable insights from the preliminary data in which respondents reported 1) a high level of satisfaction (84%), 2) that the information met their needs (85%), and that responses were very timely (94%).

Through surveys as well as listening sessions we have gathered information from older Americans that has helped us to develop ways, such as improving our website, to provide easier access to services and information. Conducting surveys is just one of the many forms of research we carry out to provide easier access to services. We have also formed partnerships with other HHS agencies and are working together to support aging in place and improve access to home and community-based services.



LISTENING TO OUR CUSTOMERS

The OAA was reauthorized in November of 2000. To implement the provisions of the newly reauthorized OAA and facilitate more accessible and flexible services for older consumers and their families, AoA conducted a series of listening sessions across the country. These sessions allowed AoA to solicit the input of those most affected by the implementation of the OAA – consumers, caregivers, service providers, State and Area Agencies on Aging, Native American Tribal Organizations, advisory councils, and representatives of national, state, and local aging organizations.

CONSUMER ASSESSMENT SURVEYS

In FY 2002, AoA took the concept of listening to our customers to a new level by conducting national surveys of OAA cli-



Supportive services

ents across six service domains: caregiver services, home delivered meals, congregate meals, transportation, information and assistance, and homemaker services. AoA interviewed approximately 3,000 elderly individuals and caregivers in over 125 local planning and service areas across the nation to assess 1) the impact of OAA services on the lives of the elderly, 2) the usefulness of services in meeting the needs of the elderly, 3) the satisfaction of clients with OAA services, and 4) the potential for service improvements. The elderly and their caregivers reported very high levels of impact, usefulness, and satisfaction; they also provided significant and extensive recommendations for program improvement. Final data from AoA's consumer assessment surveys will be made available in 2003.

IMPROVING THE AoA WEBSITE

We recognize that the majority of our consumers and their expectations have changed dramatically in less than a decade. We also realize the increasing need for government to use the latest technologies to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its business operations. With this in mind, in October we launched a historic redesign of our website, www.aoa.gov. The goal of the redesign is to create a more professional, coordinated, and streamlined state-of-the-art website that will enhance the public's ability to access aging information.



AoA's New Website Launched October 2002

The website is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of a wide variety of topics, programs, and services related to aging. The new site is geared towards older individuals, caregivers, community service providers, researchers, and students. On this new site you will find valuable information provided in a user-friendly way.



“It is so important to individuals like me and the agencies we represent to have AoA and do we find the time to commend those who assist us in completing our missions in life.

ELDERCARE LOCATOR JUST A CLICK AWAY

In an effort to further reach out to our consumers, a national survey, conducted for AoA, found that as more aging baby boomers find themselves caring for frail older family members, they often turn to the Internet when traditional information resources are not available. Long-distance caregivers also rely on the Web to identify reliable home and community-based services. This finding prompted us to launch an online version of the Eldercare Locator, www.eldercare.gov, to provide users with 24-hour access to community-assistance resources for older Americans.

EXCELLENCE IN INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

To facilitate excellence in the OAA Information and Assistance (I&A) programs that provide critical and valuable services to older persons and their families, AoA supported the development of the Certification Program for Information and Referral Specialists in aging programs. These I&A spe-

cialists are unique in their understanding of and sensitivity to the needs of older individuals and their caregivers seeking help. The program was introduced in June 2002 and has been offered nationwide since that time. A total of 120 aging I&A professionals received aging certification in 2002.

HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

AoA is leading an initiative to strengthen the role of the National Network of Aging Community Service Providers in helping older people access needed health and social supports. This effort involves a multi-faceted approach that includes the following:

- working with partners in HHS to conduct a synthesis of the research on home and community-based long-term care,
- conducting case studies on best practices and models currently being used by our national network, and
- undertaking an in-depth study of the states that have made the most progress in creating balanced systems of care. Among other things, this study will highlight the role the Aging Network has played in developing and operating these systems. Findings from this study will be available in summer 2003.

REAL CHOICE SYSTEMS CHANGE GRANTS

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded a total of \$125 million in 2001 and 2002 to states to design and implement enduring improvements in com-





your information as a resource. So often today we take the time to complain and so rarely Thank you for all you do and all that you provide to us.”

— Seminole County Sheriff’s Office

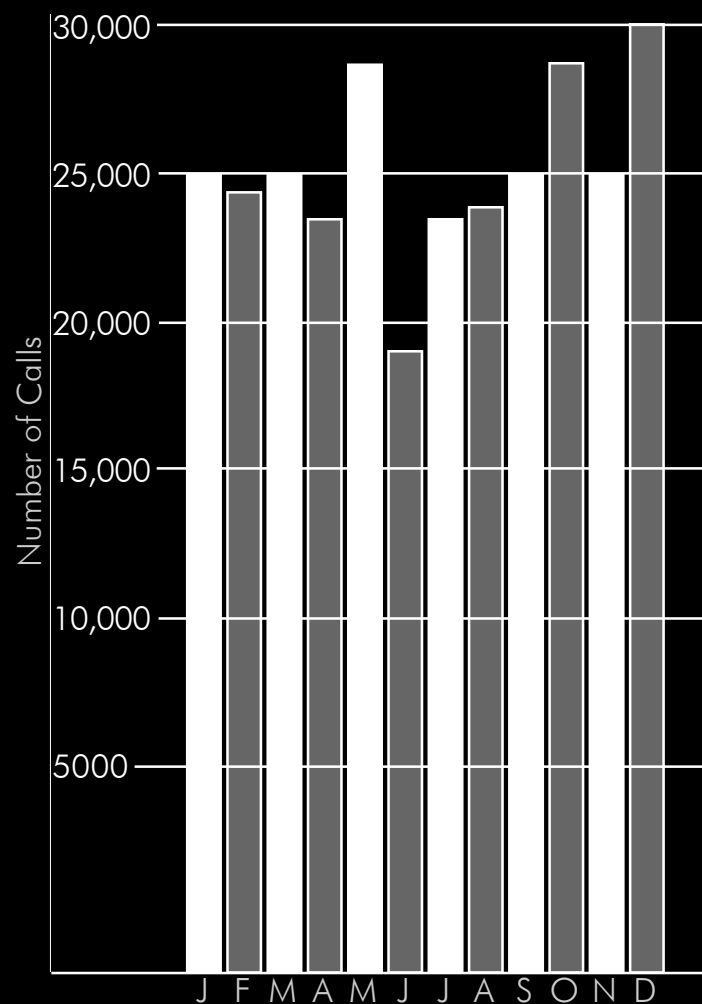
munity long-term support systems. Their hope was to enable people with disabilities of all ages to live and participate in community life. We partnered with CMS to ensure National Aging Services Network participation in the Real Choice Systems Change grants and related technical assistance activities. Six state agencies on aging were designated by their Governors as the leads on these grant projects for their states; over half are actively involved in the implementation of these systems change projects.

AGING IN PLACE

In 2002, AoA awarded \$3.7 million in support to projects in five Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) that are developing and testing models to support older adults as they age in place. Such neighborhoods or buildings can be found throughout the country. Many residents of these communities are reaching the age at which they may need assistance with daily activities, but these same individuals prefer to remain in their homes and near their family and friends.

These projects are located in Baltimore, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. AoA is partnering with the HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation to evaluate the implementation of these projects in order to determine their replicability.

Eldercare Locator Website Users per Month in 2002





health and active engagement

helping older people to stay active and healthy

AoA supports the programs and services provided by the National Aging Services Network that help keep older people active and healthy. Preliminary data from the consumer assessment surveys indicates that the Network is providing home and community-based services that older people value in helping them to lead healthy and independent lives.

- Over 80% of clients of transportation services reported high levels of satisfaction.
- The usefulness of the service is indicated in the fact that 33% percent of respondents relied on the service for virtually all of their transportation needs.
- Forty-eight percent reported getting around more than before they received transportation services.

In keeping with our mission to promote the dignity and independence of older people, we also continue to form and support initiatives and partnerships to help older people stay active and healthy.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NUTRITION PROGRAM

Adequate nutrition is essential for healthy aging, the prevention or delay of chronic disease and disease-related disabilities, and for improved quality of life. Yet poor nutrition is a major problem for older adults. Almost 90 percent have a nutrition-related chronic disease or condition such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, or osteoporosis. About 40 percent of community-dwelling older adults as well as their caregivers have inadequate food and nutrient in-



take, which affects their health and ability to function independently.

In 2002, AoA and the nation celebrated its 30th anniversary of the nutrition program. On March 22, 1972, the OAA of 1965 was amended to create the first national nutrition program for the elderly. Thirty years and close to six billion meals later, the Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP), with over 4,000 local nutrition service providers, has made an extraordinary difference in the lives of millions of seniors and their families. The OAA Nutrition Program provides for congregate and home-delivered meals, also known as Meals-On-Wheels. Other services include nutrition screening, assessment, education, and counseling. Linkages to health promotion and disease prevention programs as well as physical activity programs are also critical. These meals and other nutrition services are provided in a variety of settings, such as senior centers, schools, and in individual homes.



Program Highlights

- The cost of a one-year supply of home-delivered meals equals about the cost of one day in the hospital.
- OAA Nutrition Programs supply approximately 50% of participants total nutrient intake in a single day.
- OAA Nutrition Program participants have more social interaction than those who do not participate in AoA meal programs.
- Both congregate and home delivered nutrition services successfully target adults who are older, poorer, sicker, and more likely to live alone, live in rural areas, and be minorities.
- In FY 2001, 112 million congregate meals were served to 1.8 million older adults in states.
- In FY 2001, 143.4 million home-delivered meals were served to about 1 million homebound older adults in states.
- In FY 2001, 1.5 million congregate meals were served to 49,000 older American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.
- In FY 2001, 1.7 million home-delivered meals were served to 32,000 older American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.



The OAA Nutrition Program

“Through these and other services, the ENP promotes healthy diets and habits, and it helps elder Americans to maintain an independent lifestyle.”

— From President George W. Bush’s greeting in commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the ENP



“It is never too late to start exercising and eating properly.”

— Assistant Secretary Carbonell

USA ON THE MOVE

Poor health is not a foregone consequence of aging. Proper nutrition as part of an active, healthy lifestyle is a key to successful aging. As a part of the President’s HealthierUS Initiative, we partnered with the National Policy and Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging at Florida International University to support the USA on the Move: Steps to Healthy Aging initiative. Eating better and moving more, the two steps in Steps to Healthy Aging, are designed to improve nutrition and physical activity in older adults. Simple, modest increases in daily activities can improve overall health, prevent disease and disability, and reduce health care costs for our nation. For more information on this initiative, please visit AoA’s resource room at www.aoa.gov/eldfam/Healthy_Lifestyles/USA/USA.asp.



To further highlight the health benefits of physical activity, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and Assistant Secretary Carbonell led a group of older adults on a half-hour walk around the National Mall in Washington in May. Representatives of national aging organizations also participated in the walk.

OSTEOPOROSIS INITIATIVE

Osteoporosis is a major health concern for millions of Americans and a barrier to healthy living. Osteoporosis is largely preventable and is not a natural part of aging for women. Recognizing that more needs to be done to inform older women about their risk for osteoporosis, we are formulating an action plan to educate and raise awareness about osteoporosis among post-menopausal women.

In 2002, AoA awarded \$300,000 in grants to support the development of an osteoporosis awareness campaign. Organizations receiving these grants include the following:

- The Foundation for Osteoporosis Research and Education will convene a consensus development summit of experts called the National Osteoporosis Council (NOC) made up of representatives of osteoporosis coalitions around the country. Representatives from government-based agencies, healthcare professionals, national consumer associations, and managed care organizations will be invited.
- The National Osteoporosis Foundation will sponsor a national osteoporosis awareness survey, oversampled for minority women and stratified by older age groups, to



determine current levels of awareness among target audiences, catalog their concerns, and identify the most effective messages.

- The University of Maine will conduct a series of focus groups in four geographically dispersed locations around the country that will target the full range of diversity found among post-menopausal women.

PARTNERING WITH THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

AoA is partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address significant health problems affecting older Americans, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and the need for immunization through four demonstration grants to community coalitions. In addition, collaborative efforts between the state aging and health networks are educating older Americans on how to lessen or prevent the negative impact that can result from chronic conditions and diseases, with particular emphasis on diabetes, obesity, and asthma.



“Together pledge to walk and stay active throughout the year. Families literally can walk down the path to better health.”

— From Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson’s statement regarding Walk on the Mall 2002