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The U.S. Administration on Aging is pleased to send you its third issue of **AoA e-news**, an e-newsletter filled with key information and news for the National Aging Services Network.

Please pass this e-newsletter on to staff in your organization and let them know that they can now subscribe online at www.aoa.gov. Information about how to unsubscribe is located at the end of this newsletter.

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Messages from the Assistant Secretary

Integrating Long Term Care: Creating Single Intake Systems

I am dedicated to strengthening the role of the National Aging Services Network in the organization and delivery of long term care. One essential step in this direction is the development of an integrated system for managing intake, needs assessment, care planning, referral, and information processing services. Several states have taken this step by creating single-intake “one-stop-shop” systems encompassing all or most of the activities that must be completed to prepare older Americans to receive services. This “one-stop-shop” system will help people make informed decisions about their care options, and will be designed to make it easier for older Americans to access long term care services. At the same time, I want to emphasize that there is no wrong door for entry to these services.

It is my intention to help the National Aging Services Network at every level learn as much as possible about various approaches to providing a single intake system. To do this, AoA will soon conduct an analytical study through the AoA Long Term Care Initiative to learn more about effective models for creating a “one stop shop” system. More information about this new study will be available in the near future.

Celebrating Older Americans Month

For 40 years our nation has set aside the month of May to pay tribute to older Americans. We are proud to continue this time-honored tradition. This year’s theme, “**What we do makes a difference,**” was developed to recognize the significant contributions older persons make to our communities and our Nation. Older Americans share their experience, perspective and wisdom with younger generations. This theme also was designed to provide us with an opportunity to raise awareness about Older Americans Act programs and services and to acknowledge the critical role of the National Aging Services Network in helping older persons and their caregivers. Please provide us with feedback about Older Americans Month materials by taking our brief online survey at www.aoa.gov or by completing the postcard in the Older Americans Month kit. We invite you to tell us about how you used these materials and about your success stories. We also hope that you will consider using kit materials throughout the year to help build awareness of the many services available to older Americans and their caregivers.

Josefina G. Carbonell
Assistant Secretary for Aging

What’s Happening at AoA

AoA Older Americans Month Activities

The Assistant Secretary for Aging and AoA staff members are celebrating May as Older Americans Month in a big way this year. On May 29, U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson will celebrate Older Americans Month with a 30-minute walk on the National Mall. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary will be walking with older Americans at the *Second Annual Secretary's Walk on the Mall* to raise awareness about the importance of physical activity to the health and well-being of older Americans. Other activities include:

- Participation in the launch of Grand Driver Initiative of the Greater D.C. area. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators is launching this program to educate the public about the effects of age on driving ability and encourage drivers to make wise choices as they grow older; and
- Announcement of the release of data on the National Family Caregiver Support Program, radio and television public service announcements, and the AoA annual report.

For more information on AoA Older Americans Month activities visit the AoA Website at www.aoa.gov.

Alzheimer's Respite Care Enhances Quality of Care and Quality of Life

AoA, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, released a new study on respite care on April 28. The study shows that properly designed community-based respite programs make a significant difference in the quality of care for patients and in the quality of life for caregivers. The findings, published in a new book, *A New Look at Community Based Respite Programs: Utilization, Satisfaction and Development*, by Haworth Press, is based on an evaluation of the Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States program funded by AoA. The book offers information on patterns of respite use, cultural barriers, and strategies for improving access to community-based care. It also includes detailed examples of five successful projects that providers may be interested in replicating. AoA will provide a copy of this book to each Area Agency on Aging, State Unit on Aging, tribal organization, and member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations in late May. The evaluation report will also be posted to the AoA Alzheimer's Resource Room at www.aoa.gov/alz. Information about the study can be found at www.aoa.gov.

Policy and Program Updates

NIMH Launches Campaign to Reach Men with Depression

On April 1, the National Institute of Mental Health, one of the National Institutes of Health, announced the launch of the first national campaign to raise awareness that depression is a major public health problem affecting an estimated six million men annually. Research suggests that men are less likely to seek treatment for this serious illness; data also show that men die by suicide at four times the rate of women. To learn more, NIMH encourages individuals and organizations to call toll-free (800) 227-6464 and access their Web site at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>.

Public Television Series Exposes Mental Health and Aging Challenges

Mental illness is found in more than 50% of institutionalized elderly, and in 22% of the general elderly population, much of it undiagnosed and untreated. This high rate of mental illness among older adults has given rise to the belief that it is to be expected in elderly populations. Mental illness, however, is *not* a normal part of aging, and has staggering personal, social, and economic costs. *Well Into Your Future: Mental Health and Aging* is a new three-part documentary series, airing in May during Mental Health and Older Americans Months on Public Television stations nationwide. Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, the series addresses the challenges we experience in aging, as well as common mental health issues that persons aged 65+ encounter. It also shares the secrets of people who have maintained vitality and acuity in their later years and the coping skills of those who have survived mental and emotional difficulties and mental illnesses. Representatives of the National Aging Services Network are urged to become an outreach partner. For more information about the series and campaign visit www.wellintoyourfuture.com.

Election Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities

HHS has the responsibility for awarding funds to state and local communities under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 as a way to ensure that the voting process is accessible to people with disabilities. HHS will also fund the State Protection and Advocacy Systems to assist in this effort. The HAVA announcement is located on the Administration for Children and Families Web site at:

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/add/HAVASummary.htm>

Opportunity to Comment on Assistive Technology Mobility Devices

The Interagency Working Group on Assistive Technology Mobility Devices is inviting the public to submit written or electronically mailed comments on how well the existing federal programs and resources are serving individuals with disabilities-especially any barriers they suggest interfere with an individual's option of pooling funding to obtain the assistive technology mobility devices they need to pursue their educational and employment goals. Comments must be provided no later than June 1, 2003. The working group will also hold a public forum on May 21, 2003 in Washington, D.C. Details regarding the public forum and contact information are contained in the April 25, 2003 Department of Education *Interagency Working Group on Assistive Technology Mobility* Federal Register notice at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister>.

Making A Difference

Beginning this month, we encourage members of the National Aging Services Network to submit stories about how they make a difference in the lives of older Americans. The deadline for story submissions is the 15th of each month. Send submissions to e-news@aoa.gov.

Nevada Senior Medicare Patrol Project Receives Award

Congratulations to the Senior Nevada Advocates on Guard Senior Medicare Patrol project for being selected to receive the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare Leadership in Aging Award. AoA funds this Nevada project as one of 51 Senior Medicare Patrol projects that are part of a national effort to combat and prevent error, waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid. The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare granted the award to the Nevada Advocates on Guard SMP because the project: 1) uses innovative strategies for uncovering and reporting suspected cases of Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse; 2) can be replicated; 3) is cost effective and efficient (based on use of volunteers, pooling resources, and collaboration with state and national efforts); 4) enlists the assistance of Medicare beneficiaries, family members, friends and providers; and 5) deserves state and local recognition. Jo Anne Embry directs the Las Vegas based project. On May 14, SNAG received the Medicare Fraud, Waste and Abuse Prevention Award at a NCPSSM reception in Washington, DC along with other winners. For more information contact Sharon.Larson@aoa.gov.

[News from the Field](#)

Helping Caregivers Effectively Communicate with Healthcare Professionals

Family caregivers provide more than 80 percent of all home care services, yet usually receive no formal training or support in their roles. To address this problem, the National Family Caregiver's Association is expanding its program to help family caregivers communicate effectively with healthcare professionals. NFCA is now accepting applications for a facilitator training conference to be held on May 30-31, 2003 in Philadelphia and on August 14-15, 2003 in Denver. Nurses, social workers, and persons working with family caregivers may apply. Participants are required to present workshops for family caregivers in their communities after the conference. An application can be found at <http://www.nfcacares.org/>.

Ombudsmen 16th Annual Training Conference

The National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center convened Ombudsmen from 35 states at the Sixteenth Annual State Long Term Care Ombudsman Training Conference in Chicago in April. Conference participants, including ombudsmen and adult protective services representatives, discussed a number of pressing and emerging long term care issues. Among the many issues discussed were advocacy in adult homes serving residents with multiple chronic health and mental health diagnoses. Participants also examined how the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services Nursing Home Quality Initiative has been used to teach consumers about quality care and promote culture change in nursing homes; ways to use the newly updated ombudsman guide to the Nursing Home Reform Law; and how to improve consistency in national ombudsman reporting. Two of the many positive conference outcomes were 1) identifying concrete approaches to improving consistency in ombudsman data and 2) collaborating with adult protective services representatives attending the conference. For information about the AoA funded National Long Term Care Resource Center and the Ombudsman program click on www.ltombudsman.org or contact Sue Wheaton at Sue.Wheaton@aoa.gov.

Creating a National Agenda for Transportation and Mobility Options

The Community Transportation Association of America invites professionals in transit, economic development, human services, and mobility managers to participate in the National Summit on Transportation Coordination to be held May 19-20 in Philadelphia as part of their Expo 2003. CTTA is aiming for a dynamic exchange with conference participants as a way to build a national agenda that will dramatically improve coordination and mobility options across the nation. They highly encourage state and local aging network providers to give input on their Web site prior to the summit and to attend a "Town Meeting" session at the Summit to offer their perspectives on the barriers to coordination and innovative solutions. Log on to <http://coordination.ctaa.org> and click on "your input" to share your ideas and experience. To learn more about the Summit or the issues and activities surrounding coordination, visit <http://www.ctaa.org>.

Consumer News and Research

Myths and Realities of Consumer-Directed Services

A report, recently released at American Society on Aging/National Council On the Aging conference in March, dispels a number of myths about consumer-directed services. Consumer direction is an approach for improving long term care services that is based on a philosophy that older persons and people with disabilities can effectively exercise greater autonomy and control over the services they receive. *The Myths and Realities of Consumer-Directed Services for Older Persons* report offers providers a number of important facts about consumer-directed services. It is a product of the *Promoting Consumer Direction in the Aging Network* project of the National Association of State Units on Aging and The National Council on the Aging funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Marie Squillace, AoA Federal Project Officer for the *National Family Caregiver Support Program* and James Firman, President and CEO of the National Council on the Aging co-authored the report. A copy of the report can be downloaded at http://www.consumerdirection.org/pdf/myths_and_realities.pdf.

New Online Resources for Caregivers

In the course of caregiving responsibilities, approximately 25 million Americans will participate in health care decisions that involve Medicare. Unfortunately, these decision points often occur during crises, leaving caregivers little time to digest options and fully understand the Medicare program. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have produced a new online resource to help caregivers in this position. *Medicare Basics: A Guide for Caregivers* provides caregivers with a guide for going through eight critical decision points in the health care process. It was produced by CMS with the assistance of the National Alliance for Caregiving and in collaboration with AoA and other organizations. CMS has also created *When Employees Become Caregivers: A Manager's Workbook* that includes an outline of issues that affect employees; educational pointers about the daily effect of caregiving; and no cost and low cost solutions for

businesses. Both resources are available at <http://cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/materials/caregiversbrochure/default.asp>.

HHS Expands Online Health Information for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

In recognition of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson recently launched two new online health resources of special interest to Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. The new Web sites expand on the department's Steps to a HealthierUS initiative, which underscores the President's call to action for healthy lifestyles through public awareness of disease prevention efforts. "Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islander communities are affected disproportionately by cardiovascular disease, cancer, hepatitis B, tuberculosis and other diseases," Secretary Thompson said. "At HHS, we're increasing our online presence to bring culturally relevant and appropriate health information and services to their fingertips. Together, these two new resources provide a rich network of complementary information, and offer broad-based knowledge of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. "

The department's consumer oriented healthfinder® Web site now includes a new section devoted to Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations. Available at <http://www.healthfinder.gov/justforyou>, the user-friendly Web site brings together multi-lingual information in Cambodian, Chinese, Hmong, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, Thai, Tongan and Vietnamese. The new consumer resource will be useful to caregivers, patients and others searching for health information on behalf of individuals more comfortable in their native language. Complementing the new healthfinder® section is "Asian American Health," a companion Web site launched by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Library of Medicine. Found at <http://asianamericanhealth.nlm.nih.gov>, the site features census data on major Asian American populations, background on cultural traditions and heritage, links to health policy offices, online medical databases, publications and other organizations.

Education Program Launched for Women Exposed to DES

Many national aging services providers serve women who were pregnant or born between 1938-1971. These women might have been exposed to DES (diethylstilbestrol). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has launched an education program about health effects related to DES. They provide information for women exposed to DES during pregnancy and the children born of those pregnancies. For information on the CDC DES Update call toll-free at (888) 232-6789 and check the DES Update Web site at www.cdc.gov/DES. For more information contact Dr. Marsha Vanderford, at mev7@cdc.gov.

Linkages Between Successful Aging and Senior Center Participation

A new survey, *Identifying Important Linkages Between Successful Aging and Senior Center Participation*, found that senior centers provide a range of supportive services and opportunities to cultivate personal relationships that improve the physical and mental health of older persons and allow them to remain independent longer. A positive association was found between attending health promotion programs and practicing healthful behaviors. As participants made lifestyle changes, they also enjoyed a more positive outlook on life. Findings support the notion that senior centers provide an important focal point in the lives of older Americans. The National Institute of Senior Centers conducted the multi-state survey of older Americans utilizing senior centers in seven states. It was conducted to determine whether multipurpose seniors centers achieve their goals of enabling older persons to remain independent and providing them with a strong social support system. For more information contact Ronald A. Aday, Ph.D. at raday@mtsu.edu.

Of Interest

Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars, and Events

Through his *HealthierUS Initiative*, President Bush has made all of us more aware of the positive actions that we can take to lead healthier lives. Our food choices, lifestyle, and environment all affect our health. We know that dietary factors contribute to preventable diseases and deaths. The University of Minnesota School of Public Health has published *Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars, and Catered Events*, a document, that can help all of us who plan and hold meetings. This document found at <http://www.sph.umn.edu> can help all of us promote our own health and the health of our colleagues.

Large Unmet Need for Adult Day Services Identified in National Study

Partners in Caregiving, an organization of Wake Forest University School of Medicine, has identified a total of 3,407 adult day centers in the United States in a 2001-2002 national study of adult day service providers. Although growth in the number of adult day care centers was evident, services lagged behind the need for service with 56 percent of the counties designated as under-served based on study results. Researchers projected a need for 5,415 adult day care centers nationwide. Researchers conducted a census of adult day serve providers; surveyed providers to determine populations served and services offered; and identified gaps in utilization and availability. For more information contact: Nancy J. Cox, Director, Partners in Caregiving, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Medical Center Boulevard, Winston-Salem, NC 27157-1087. Copies of the study may be ordered by calling toll-free at (800) 795-3676.

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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