



September/October 2004

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### Message from the Assistant Secretary: Update on the Flu Vaccine

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Many of us have been receiving calls from seniors and providers who are concerned about their ability to access the flu vaccine. I want to assure you that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services are working hard to get vaccine out to communities that need it in an orderly fashion. I would like to emphasize that we are still very early in the flu season, and that seniors, their families, and their caregivers should remain calm. Today about 61 million doses of influenza vaccine combined with an ample supply of antiviral medicines -- potentially enough for more than 40 million people during the flu season -- puts America in a strong position to keep people safe during the upcoming flu season. Adventis Pasteur shipped more than 2 million doses of influenza vaccine during the week of October 11-15 to health care providers throughout the country who serve the high-priority groups recommended by the CDC to receive influenza vaccine during the 2004-2005 season. Doses will continue to be shipped at a rate of about 3 million each week for the next 6-7 weeks to public health and private providers for use in the priority populations.

There's still time for people in the high-priority groups to get the vaccine and be protected before peak flu season, which typically occurs in February or March. Influenza antiviral medications are another tool that can be used to prevent influenza and, for those ill with the flu, to reduce the number of days of illness. We hope providers and clinics will follow the guidelines, and we have faith that Americans will follow them as well to protect the country's most vulnerable populations. As trusted sources of information in the community, you can help us get the message to healthy people and those at risk about who needs to get the vaccine and who can step aside this season. [Click for Full Story.](#)

For more information visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

Josefina G. Carbonell

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## **New Surgeon General's Report on America's Bone Health**

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HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona released the first-ever Surgeon General's report on the state of America's bone health on October 14. The report details those who are most affected by osteoporosis and low bone mass, outlines the severe repercussions associated with untreated bone disease, provides recommendations for improving the nation's bone health, and discusses the potential risk for millions of Americans if preventive action is not taken.

Copies of the full report and a simple guide to improving bone health, "The 2004 Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis: What It Means To You," are now available upon request by calling 1-866-718-BONE or downloading at [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).

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## **Medicare Advantage Plans Expand Coverage to Seniors and Lowers Costs**

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On October 6, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced Medicare Advantage plans were seeking to expand coverage to 1.6 million additional seniors and persons with disabilities, while also lowering their premium and out of pocket covered services costs by an average of 10 percent and providing more benefits -- evidence that the new Medicare Modernization law is a successful investment in seniors and their access to better health care benefits. Secretary Thompson said that 35 Medicare Advantage plans had made new applications to provide coverage and 22 had applied for expansion of service areas. If approved this translates into 1.6 million additional Medicare beneficiaries living in 93 counties and 11 states who will have access to Medicare Advantage plans. This expansion is on top of the nearly 5 million Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans who will continue to receive high quality care at affordable costs in 2005. You can access plan benefits and premiums on [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE. This information also is currently being mailed as part of the Medicare & You 2005 handbook that should be arriving in beneficiaries' homes within the next couple of weeks. For the full story go to: <http://www.dhhs.gov/news/press/2004pres/20041006a.html>.

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For the full issue of the September/October AoA e-news visit: .

## AoA News

### Integrated Care Management Grants

On October 7, AoA awarded 14 grants totaling \$600,000 to support innovative approaches to integrated care management in the Aging Services Network. These grants are specifically designed to identify and support innovations in aging services that involve partnerships with managed care organizations or capitated financing arrangements to improve the quality of care for older people. As new options for older people are emerging in health and long-term care, managed care is playing an increasingly important role. We believe this new program holds great promise for demonstrating how the core values and competencies of our Aging Services Network can be effectively combined with managed care models and approaches to enhance the quality of care for our growing elderly population. This program is part of a larger strategic effort AoA has undertaken to strengthen the role of community aging services programs in promoting a more balanced and integrated system of health and long term care for older people. For more information go to:

<http://www.aoa.gov/press/pr/pr.asp>.

### Families in Action for Health: U.S./Mexico Border Health Week

This year marked the first U.S./Mexico Border Health Week, in which nearly 200 health-promotion activities took place in 14 U.S./Mexico sister cities along the border. This border-wide event, held between October 11 and 17, was a collaboration among the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Mexican Ministry of Health, the U.S./Mexico Border Health Commission, the Pan

American Health Organization and local and state organizations and communities. The Assistant Secretary on Aging made remarks at the Texas *Aging to Perfection* Health Expo, a major event of the week featuring health awareness exhibits for all ages in El Paso. The Rio Grande Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging hosted the event. The Assistant Secretary also led a mini-walk of the Expo, met with local officials, and toured the Bienvivir Senior Health Services and the Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe. For more information on the U.S./Mexico Border Health Week: [www.borderinfo.org](http://www.borderinfo.org).

### **Hispanic Heritage Month Wrap Up**

From September 15 through October 15, America celebrated National Hispanic Heritage Month and the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

HHS, AoA, and the Aging network are responding to the changing demographics by developing culturally appropriate programs and services responsive to the diverse needs of older Hispanic American adults and their families. According to the most recent NAPIS data, 6.1 % of the Older Americans Act recipients were Hispanic, although Hispanics currently make up 5.5% of the older population. For example:

- This year, one quarter of AoA grants under the Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States program will specifically target Hispanic families.
- Last year, we launched an Evidence-Based Prevention grants program, and we are giving special attention to Hispanic elders under this program.
- AoA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention worked in partnership to get the word out about the need to improve immunization rates among older Hispanics and older African-Americans.
- Through grantees such as the Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores and a national network of partnerships with local Aging Network, community and faith-based organizations, AoA will assure that its Hispanic community investments will result in linkages that reach low-income and immigrant Hispanic elders.
- We have enhanced the ability of the Eldercare Locator and the Alzheimer's Call Center to provide information and assistance in Spanish.
- Medicare will provide valuable assistance to the 2.85 million Hispanics enrolled in Medicare through the Medicare Modernization Act including the new Medicare-approved prescription drug discount card. To select and sign-up for one of the Medicare-approved prescription discount cards in Spanish or English call: **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**. For more information about this Medicare benefit visit: <http://www.medicare.gov>. For the full story visit: <http://www.aoa.gov/press/news/news.asp#hbm>.

### **Active Aging Partners Briefing**

Edwin Walker, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs recently discussed AoA's prevention strategies, including the *You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging* campaign with 25 members of the International Council on Active Aging. The

Assistant Secretary and organizational representatives held a dialog about possible collaborations, including participation in the *You Can!* campaign on September 27 in Washington, DC as part of Active Aging Week, September 27 – October 3. The ICAA, an organization serving more than 3,500 organizations and professionals serving older adult markets on prevention issues, hosted this meeting. For more information visit: <http://www.aoa.gov/youcan/news/news.asp>.

## **Policy and Program Updates**

### **New Freedom Initiative Real Choice Systems Change Grant Awards**

HHS Awarded \$31 Million in grants to 31 states on October 5 to help individuals with disabilities and older adults. HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced \$31 million in grants to 31 states to help people with disabilities or long-term illnesses live in their homes and participate fully in community life. The grants are a part of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative, which promotes the goal of community living for individuals with disabilities and long-term illnesses. Under this initiative, which began in 2001, 10 federal agencies work with states and community organizations to remove barriers to community living. The grants awarded help states and other eligible entities improve their home and community-based services programs. A total of 52 grants were awarded in nine categories. For the full story visit: <http://www.dhhs.gov/news/press/2004pres/20041005a.html>.

### **HHS Celebrated Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day in Baltimore**

On September 21, DHHS celebrated "Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day" all across the nation. In Baltimore, Maryland Aoa participated in hosting a health fair to disseminate health educational materials, both in English and Spanish, and free health cardiovascular disease, hypertension, glaucoma, asthma, HIV/AIDs and other health conditions. Seniors qualifying for Medicaid were able to enroll in Medicaid on-site and also received information about expanded preventive services under the Medicare program and the Medicare-approved Drug Discount Card. The Assistant Secretary for Aging spoke at the event about the steps that seniors can take to stay active and healthy, and AoA offered educational information to health fair participants at its exhibit. *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*, held during the third Tuesday of each September, is a national health event held in conjunction with ABC Radio Networks and the Department of Health and Human Services. The focus of this national event is to encourage individuals to take charge of their health by visiting a health professional, making an appointment for a visit, attending a health event in the community, or helping a friend, neighbor, or family member do the same. Last year more than 400 national, state, and local partners planned local health activities in more than 200 communities across the nation. For further information about Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day visit: <http://www.healthgap.omhrc.gov/2004factsheetdrday.htm>.

### **NCBA Hosts Take Your Love One to the Doctor Day Event**

The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc. hosted a health awareness and screening day to commemorate "Take Your Loved One to the Doctor's Day" on September 21, 2004 at the NCBA Estates in Washington, DC. They invited clinicians from Howard University's Division of Geriatrics; University of Maryland School of Undergraduate Studies, Gerontology, and Social Science Department; and the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation to administer varied

health awareness and screenings for the attendees and had an information kiosk full of resources and pamphlets. For more information about NCBA go to:  
<http://www.ncba-aged.org>.

### **Vital Visionaries Program: 'Serious Fun' to Improve Medical Students Attitudes towards Older People**

Creating art with older "teammates" made first-year medical students more sensitive to older people, according to results of the Vital Visionaries Collaboration, a pilot program developed by the National Institute on Aging in conjunction with the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. Launched in March 2004 as a pilot project, the VV program paired 15 first-year medical students from Johns Hopkins with 15 older people from the Baltimore area. The two-person teams met and learned from older visionary artists, took a contour drawing class, and worked on various art projects at AVAM in conjunction with its year-long exhibition, "Golden Blessings of Old Age/Out of the Mouths of Babes." Visionary art is produced by self-taught individuals, usually without formal training, whose works arise from an innate personal vision. The Vital Visionaries program was based on a study conducted by Dr. Marie A. Bernard and investigators at the University of Oklahoma's Reynolds Department of Geriatric Medicine. Their study, published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (March 2003), observed that "healthcare professionals tend to believe that most older individuals are frail and dependent and that those who are not are atypical," despite data showing that most elders are in good health and live in the community. For a copy of the final report, please contact Jeannine Mjoseh at 301/451-8409 or [mjosehj@nia.nih.gov](mailto:mjosehj@nia.nih.gov).

### **Making A Difference**

#### **Village on the Isle Assisted Living Program**

The Village on the Isle Affordable Assisted Living Program is a private, faith-based initiative that was created by Village on the Isle and is intended to provide affordable assisted living units to low-income seniors within the community. Units that the facility expects to be vacant are offered to low-income seniors at a reduced rate. The Program is open to local residents whose incomes do not exceed \$1,600 per month and who are referred by a recognized agency or religious organization. Village on the Isle is a not-for-profit continuing care community located in Venice, Florida. Village on the Isle opened in 1982 and is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The organization currently provides an array of quality accommodations and services to over 400 seniors, including independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing care. In addition, Village on the Isle assists with arrangements for home health services, offers a comprehensive wellness program, and is a local Meals-On-Wheels provider. In addition to providing a valuable service, VOTI has been able to demonstrate a substantial increase in its occupancy rate, from 80% to 93%. This increase, combined with savings created by economies of scale, has resulted in an overall increase in revenues. In addition, the program has facilitated additional market-rate referrals from the same groups that participate in the affordable assisted living program, which, in turn, has helped to lower VOTI's overall marketing costs. VOTI has also strengthened its ties with the community and has been praised for its efforts to help lower-income members of the community access needed assisted living services. For information regarding this program, visit <http://www.floridaaffordableassistedliving.com/does/faal/developer/demo12.html>

or contact: Tom Kelly, CEO at [TKelly@villageontheisle.com](mailto:TKelly@villageontheisle.com).

## Of Interest

### **New Caregiving Public Education Program**

The National Family Caregivers Association and the National Alliance for Caregiving will begin a national public education program for family members who care for a loved one. They launched a new campaign on October 28, "Family Caregiving...it's not all up to you." It is designed to help family caregivers understand how caregiving is an added dimension to their traditional roles as spouse, child, or parent and that it is appropriate to ask for help. The central component of the campaign is the Web site. It will offer tools to help caregivers reclaim control of their personal time, while becoming more capable, confident caregivers. The multi-media outreach program is being made possible through the generous support of Eisai Inc. For more information visit: [www.familycaregiving101.org](http://www.familycaregiving101.org).

### **Call for Sessions: 21<sup>st</sup> National Home & Community Based Services Waiver Conference**

You are invited to submit a proposal to present a sessions at the 21<sup>st</sup> National Home & Community Based Services Waiver Conference to be held May 15-18, 2005 in Orlando, Florida. This conference is the only national conference designed to meet the unique needs of professionals who administer and operate HCBS waivers that serve persons with disabilities of all ages. The conference is convened by the National Association of State Units on Aging and hosted by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs in collaboration with four other Florida agencies. They include the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, the Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Children & Families; and the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The deadline for submitting session proposals is October 31. For more information or to register for the conference go to: [www.nasua.org/waiverconference](http://www.nasua.org/waiverconference).

### **New HHS online Resource Highlights Research Findings.**

The HHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion recently published a new online resource that highlights research findings on topics such as asthma, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, healthy eating and nutrition, heart disease, obesity and physical activity. The Prevention Communication Research Database provides reports by prevention topic areas that have been identified by the President in the *Healthier US Initiative* and by the HHS Secretary in the *Steps to a Healthier US Initiative*. For more information go to: <http://www.health.gov/communication/db/pcrd.asp>.

### **The Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook**

This new *Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook* report is a collection of current state data on critical issues of relevance to women's health. Prepared by the HHS Office on Women's Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the report ranks each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico on 27 indicators, including major causes of death, health risk factors, preventive care, and health insurance coverage. For more



information visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/04facts/womenshealth.htm>

### **Save the Date: 19<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control**

The theme of this year's 19<sup>th</sup> *National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control* is *Health Disparities: Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities-Accelerating the Rate of Progress in Improving Lives*. It will be held March 1-3, 2005 at the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta, Georgia. For more information go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/conference/overview.htm>

### **New NIA *Working with Your Older Patient: A Clinician's Handbook***

The National Institute on Aging recently published a newly revised guide that offers tips and strategies for clinicians—physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and other health professionals seeking to build relationships and bridge communication gaps with older patients. *Working with Your Older Patient* addresses difficult-to-discuss issues, provides practical tips to promote adherence to treatment, and lists resources for more information. Useful for primary care providers and health professionals working with seniors in outpatient settings, and as a training tool for students and new practitioners.

To request your FREE copy of *Working with Your Older Patient* order online at [www.niapublications.org](http://www.niapublications.org) or call the NIA Information Center toll-free at 1-800-222-2225.

### **Special Report of Perspectives on Patient Safety**

The September 2004 *Special Report of Perspectives on Patient Safety* is now available online with free, unrestricted access. This Special Report is devoted entirely to the Joint Commission's 2005 National Patient Safety Goals. The report provides practical advice and tips for meeting these goals and their associated requirements. Here is what you will get with this Special Report:

- Practical, how-to information on meeting the Joint Commission's 2005 National Patient Safety Goals
- Compliance tips addressing a specific goal component
- Scoring information for the 2005 goals and requirements
- Updated information about the 2004 goals and requirements being carried over into 2005

The current issue is available at:

<http://jcrinc.co.mansellgroup.net/UM/T.asp?A2557.25634.891.1.4114>.

### **Disclaimer from the U.S. Administration on Aging**

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[http://www.aoa.gov/press/eneewsletter/archive/eneewsletter\\_archive.asp](http://www.aoa.gov/press/eneewsletter/archive/eneewsletter_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](mailto:aoainfo@aoa.gov); or visit us on the Web at [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov).

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