



Advocates from Macomb County



OLDER MICHIGANIANS DAY

Over 700 Advocates Attend Annual Event

Older adults, adults with disabilities and advocates weathered the near ninety-degree heat to rally on the Capitol Lawn in support of aging services. The largest statewide advocacy event on behalf of Michigan's seniors, Older Michiganians Day, reflected a spirit of celebration and accomplishment as participants met with legislators to thank them for much needed

increases in funding for the MI Choice home-and community-based Medicaid waiver program. Several legislators, who held key decision-making roles, spoke to the crowd expressing their commitment to supporting a person's wish to receive long-term care services in their home or community setting. Advocates were also thrilled to learn that Governor Rick Snyder, the day before, signed into law a package of 10 elder abuse protection bills. Check out www.oldermichiganiansday.com for photos and highlights.

Elder Abuse Laws Strengthened In Michigan

On June 19, Governor Rick Snyder signed into law a package of ten elder abuse protection and prevention bills, ending a six year effort among advocates and legislators to increase penalties and give law enforcement, families, and witnesses additional tools to tackle these growing crimes. These laws put would-be perpetrators on notice that citizens are watching and officials will impose harsh penalties upon conviction. Michigan has lagged behind other states in strengthening vulnerable protections, and while this package of ten laws are an accomplishment, eight bills still remain



From left: Kari Sederburg, Director, MI Office of Services to the Aging (OSA); Wendi Middleton, OSA; Jerutha Kennedy, MI Commission on Services to the Aging; Mary Ablan, AAA Association of Michigan; Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker, elder abuse champion; Governor Rick Snyder; Lynne McCollum, OSA; Trish Powell, Prosecuting Attorneys Association; Judy Sivak, Region 3-A AAA; Cynthia Farrell, MI Dept..of Human Services; Lisa Dedden Cooper, AARP Michigan

in the House of Representatives. The state Senate passed the entire 18-bill package in 2011. Descriptions of the new laws can be found on the AAA 1-B website under Advocacy Issues & Positions, or [click here](#). For a paper copy of bill descriptions, contact Ann at (248) 262-1282.

Breaking News: Affordable Care Act Upheld

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the controversial Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as the Health Care Law, is constitutional, including the individual mandate that undergirds the Act's other provisions. For now, older adults will continue to benefit from the provisions of the ACA, many of which have already taken effect. Justices did rule against one provision, and states may opt out of Medicaid expansion in 2014 without losing existing Medicaid dollars. Proponents hail the ruling as a victory for individuals who do not have health insurance coverage, and look forward to 2014 when all individuals will be required to have coverage or be penalized.



U.S. Supreme Court

Low-income individuals will be given subsidies to purchase insurance, and as the Supreme Court noted, those who do not obtain insurance will be assessed a tax. Opponents of the ACA in Congress vow to dismantle it through various means, including withholding appropriations to Act programs. Since its enactment in 2010, certain provisions, such as the Elder Justice Act, have not been funded by Congress. However, significant savings have resulted from the Act thus far: beneficiaries of Medicaid Part D saved \$3.7 billion and the growth in Medicare spending declined from 7.6% per year to 5.1%.

The ACA benefits adults age 60 and over in many ways, including:

- For those not yet on Medicare, as long premiums are paid on a regular basis, insurance coverage will not be eliminated should the beneficiary become sick or disabled. Lifetime dollar limits will no longer be attributed to a beneficiary's health insurance plan
- Preventative screenings for diseases such as cancer and diabetes are provided free to the beneficiary
- Preexisting conditions will not keep individuals from getting health insurance
- Premiums will not be increased based on age
- By 2014, individuals will have more insurance purchasing options, especially those who have been refused health insurance in the past. Individuals will be able to search for the best insurance plan for them through state-based Exchanges
- Medicare beneficiaries receive a free Annual Wellness Visit to their physician
- Discounts for Medicare Part D (prescription drug coverage) are increasing, closing the doughnut hole by 2020
- More resources will be allocated to address fraud and abuse in the Medicare program
- Hospitals will receive lower Medicare reimbursement rates for avoidable readmissions – leading to higher quality of care for patients
- Programs are being developed that provide supports and information to individuals to help them successfully transition from the hospital back to home

Sources: AARP. Retrieved from <http://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-06-2012/supreme-court-upholds-affordable-care-act.html?intcmp=HPBANNER> June 28, 2012

National Council On Aging. Retrieved from http://www.ncoa.org/assets/files/pdf/100722_Affordable-Care-Ltr.pdf June 28, 2012

Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/8061.pdf> June 28, 2012

AAA 1-B Advisory Council Member Receives State Community Service Award



Jim Forrer and Tina Abbate Marzolf

James C. Forrer of Troy, a member of AAA 1-B's Advisory Council, was honored with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's annual Claude Pepper Award for exemplary community service, in the retired person category. Jim received the award at this year's Older Michiganians Day event in Lansing, along with a check for \$1,000 to be given to the charity of his choice. Jim was thrilled to accept the award and plans to donate the money to his newly-founded charity, **Helping Angels**. AAA 1-B's CEO Tina Abbate Marzolf's nomination letter captured Jim's generous spirit, and will inspire advocates of all ages.

"Jim Forrer has been retired for many years, but that doesn't mean that he isn't busy. For more than a decade he has dedicated himself to helping people. His main focus is on volunteering to help older adults, but he helps people of all ages when asked. Jim is an active volunteer for Emerald Food Services (Meals on Wheels), Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Salvation Army, Shoplifters Anonymous, and Troy Police Volunteer Corps. Two months ago he started his own non-profit, 501© 3 organization called Helping Angels which is dedicated to helping individuals, where and when needed. Jim does not draw a salary from the organization.

Most often, Jim uses his own resources to support his community service work. Whether it's throwing a Senior Picnic for individuals living in Clawson Manor senior housing complex or standing in court next to a 66 year old woman who is trying to get help in the legal system, Jim dedicates his time, his compassion, and his resources to helping others. He volunteers up to seven days per week and still makes time for his large family and grandchildren.

Jim has always been a leader. He left home at an early age and, with his knack for making people happy, worked his way up to President of public relations and marketing company. He has also worked as a motivational speaker working with Fortune 500 companies. When Jim was recently asked to speak at a local high school about the dangers of drug and alcohol use, he took the time to develop a full presentation. He had a little fun along the way too, enjoying the opportunity for intergenerational learning."

Jim has served on the AAA 1-B Advisory Council for four years, participating in advocacy efforts, providing thoughtful insight and words of affirmation to staff members, and helping to support a number of issues impacting seniors and people with disabilities. Ask Jim Forrer what drives him, and he'll reply, "At 70 , I work hard, feeling, learning, experiencing, being with God. If you do this, you will see... success will always be with you."

U.S. Senate Releases FY 2013 Budget Proposal

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its FY13 spending bill for human services and related agencies. This broad-based bill includes funding for aging services and the dollars appropriated nearly parallel the Administration's budget. While most Older Americans Act programs would see funding remain at FY 2012 levels, the committee does propose *increases* in some programs including elder falls prevention, respite care, and housing counseling which includes reverse mortgage counseling. Also, the Elder Justice Act would receive first time funding for Adult Protective Services demonstration projects.

Highlights of the Senate-recommended FY 2013 budget for aging programs

Programs that Serve Older Adults	FY 2013 Senate Proposal	FY 2013 Administration Budget	FY 2012 Final Budget
Senate-Proposed INCREASES from FY 2012			
Commodity Supplemental Food Program—to keep up with the rising price of food	\$187 million	\$187 million	\$177 million
Elder Falls Prevention	\$12 million	N/A	\$2 million
Elder Justice Act	\$8 million	\$ 8 million	\$0
Housing Counseling	\$55 million	\$55 million	\$45 million
Lifespan Respite Care	\$5 million	\$2 million	\$2 million
Senior Corps	\$209 million	\$208 million	\$207 million
Senate-Proposed LEVEL FUNDING from FY 2012			
Other Older Americans Act Programs: Supportive services and senior centers, nutrition programs, preventative health, National Family Caregivers Support, Aging & Disability Resource Centers, Alzheimer's Disease demonstration programs	\$1.22 billion	\$1.22 billion	\$1.22 billion
Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP)	\$10 million	\$10 million	\$10 million
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)	\$677 million	\$350 million	\$677 million
HUD Section 202: Housing for the Elderly	\$375 million	\$475 million	\$375 million
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	\$3.47 billion	\$3.02 billion	\$3.47 billion
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	\$448 million	\$448 million	\$448 million
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Formerly known as food stamps	\$80 billion	\$82 billion	\$80.4 billion
State Health Insurance Program—Operating as the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) in Michigan	\$52 million	\$52 million	\$52 million

Source: National Council on Aging. Retrieved from <http://www.ncoa.org/assets/files/pdf/FY13-Request.pdf>, June 28, 2012.



The Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) is a nonprofit agency serving the needs of older adults in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties. Contact Ann Langford at (248) 262-1282 or by e-mail at alangford@aaa1b.com to join the Senior Advocacy Network or receive copies of AAA 1-B reports referenced in The Advocate.