



## Medicare QI Program Extended

On March 31 the U.S. Congress voted to extend the Medicare Qualified Income Program by one year. This program assists nearly 500,000 low-income Medicare beneficiaries nationwide with paying their Medicare Part B premiums. If this program were to end, low income seniors and adults with disabilities would be required to pay an additional 8-11% of their total monthly income for the cost of their health care, or go without access to their primary care physicians.

The National Council on Aging reports that over 1,500 advocates from around the nation made their voices heard asking Congress to make the Medicare QI program permanent. Though we did not achieve the goal of permanence yet, 500,000 low-income seniors and adults with disabilities will be able to access this program for another year. Additionally, Congress included \$25 million to reach and enroll more eligible seniors into Medicare Savings programs like QI to help make healthcare more affordable. The push to make the Medicare QI program permanent will continue in 2015.

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## Silver Key Coalition Update

March marked a significant milestone in the efforts to increase funding for Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) funded senior in-home services. The House Community Health Appropriations Subcommittee concurred with Governor Snyder's proposal and reported their budget recommendations in HB 5296 (H-1) which includes an increase of \$5 million to the OSA. HB 5296 will move to the full House Appropriations Committee for consideration and then to the full House for approval. The Senate is following a similar process but has not yet released their recommendations. The Silver Key Coalition is continuing to meet with and educate legislators as the appropriations process continues.

Support for increasing OSA in-home service funding is gaining momentum at the local levels. Macomb County Commissioner Toni Mocerri and Oakland County Commissioners Kathy Crawford and Helaine Zack have worked with their respective commissions to vote and adopt resolutions supporting the effort to make Michigan a no wait state.

In addition, Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners Yousef Rabhi, Felicia Brabec and Andy LaBarre (pictured left to right) are showing their support by wearing their Silver Key Lapel Pins.



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Please consider joining with the coalition to say “thank you” to the members of the House Community Health Subcommittee for their efforts to make Michigan a no wait state for senior in-home services.

Members include: Rep. Matt Lori (R-Constantine), Reps. Rob VerHeulen (R-Walker), Paul Muxlow (R-Brown City), Pete MacGregor (R-Rockford), Jim Stamas (R-Midland), Rashida Tlaib (D-Detroit), Brandon Dillon (D-Grand Rapids), and John Olumba (D-Detroit).



Picture: EMU Master of Social Work Student Nita Meyerink “pins” Representative Mike Shirkey (R- Clarklake) showing his support for OSA in-home services.

## Older Michiganians Day 2014

Tuesday, June 3, 2014 marks the Older Michiganians Day Rally on the East Lawn of the State Capitol building in Lansing. The rally provides Michigan’s seniors, legislators, advocates and allies with the opportunity to come together in solidarity and support of issues key to enabling positive aging and quality of life.

Michigan’s 60+ population is increasing by 135 residents every day! This year’s theme continued from 2013 is, “Healthy Aging, Healthy Michigan” recognizing the importance of access to high quality long term supports and service options which are essential to lowering health care costs for all, and improving quality of life.

**Ticket information:** Though this event is free and the public is welcome to attend, tickets providing a complimentary lunch are limited and available through the Area Agency on Aging 1-B. In addition to a lunch ticket, the Area Agency on Aging 1-B will assist with arranging meetings with you and your legislators during the rally.

Tickets can be reserved by phone at 248-262-1282 or by email at [rcowmeadow@aaa1b.com](mailto:rcowmeadow@aaa1b.com). If you are able to meet with your legislator, please reserve your tickets ASAP so we can arrange the meeting.

More information including this year’s advocacy platform can be found at: [www.oldermichiganiansday.com](http://www.oldermichiganiansday.com).

Special thanks are in order for the generosity of the sponsors, Consumers Energy, Health Alliance Plan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, United Health Care, Michigan Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers and the Arthritis Foundation, without whom, this day would not be possible.



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 Ryan Cowmeadow, (248) 262-1282 or by e-mail at [rcowmeadow@aaa1b.com](mailto:rcowmeadow@aaa1b.com) to join the Senior Advocacy Network or receive copies of AAA 1-B reports referenced in The Advocate.