

AoA e-news

The U.S. Administration on Aging

September 2003, Volume I, Issue 7

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

Please share this e-newsletter with 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.

For previous issues of the **AoA e-news** visit the AoA Web site at www.aoa.gov/press/enewsletter/enewsletter.asp.

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Message from the Assistant Secretary

Celebrating Health in Aging Month

AoA is partnering with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to celebrate Health in Aging Month this September by conducting health promotion and disease prevention activities for vulnerable and underserved older Americans. Activities and educational offerings for health professionals will be offered through Geriatric Educational Centers (GECs), Community Health Centers (CHCs), and Area Agencies on Aging. These partnerships will help sustain the health and quality of life for a rapidly growing older population, many of whom already have multiple chronic diseases. Members of the National Aging Services Network will be participating in activities such as free health screenings, immunizations, mental health information, medication management, and nutrition information. For more information or to locate GECs within your local area go to: <http://www.hcoa.org/nagec/>
For CHC information contact Josette Rufus of HRSA (301) 594-4143. For other information about Health in Aging Month activities contact Mindy Freedman of AoA at Mindy.Freedman@aoa.gov.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month will be celebrated this year from September 15 through October 15. We encourage you to participate in the planning of Hispanic Heritage Month ceremonies and activities and celebrate it by recognizing the value and contributions of Americans who are Latinos/Hispanic. As part of Hispanic Heritage Month, AoA and the Food and Drug Administration will convene a forum in Washington, DC with Hispanic and Latino leadership to identify issues that affect older Hispanic Americans and develop culturally sensitive health promotion and disease prevention messages. AoA has entered into an agreement with the FDA to support bilingual health promotion and disease prevention education and outreach to older Hispanic Americans. Through this partnership AoA and FDA will address issues such as safe use of medications and medication management, nutrition and healthy eating, drug interactions, adverse event reporting, and dietary supplements. For a statistical profile of Hispanic older Americans Aged 65+ go to: http://www.aoa.gov/prof/Statistics/minority_aging/Facts-on-Hispanic-Elderly.pdf

Josefina G. Carbonell

[What's Happening at AoA](#)

AoA National Summit—Act Before September 1 and Save

Register now for the AoA National Summit on *Creating Caring Communities* to be held September 21-23, 2003, in Orlando, Florida at the Caribe Royale Hotel. **Make hotel reservations before September 1** and save by receiving the conference hotel rate.

The National Summit is designed for professionals and advocates at the state and local levels who are vital to reshaping our health and long term care system. The AoA

National Summit offers an exciting opportunity to hear from nationally recognized experts about subjects that are crucial to your organization's future success and get practical tools and information. Sessions address these crucial topics:

- Creating a more balanced system of long term care;
- Building effective prevention and health promotion strategies into community care; and
- Supporting our Nation's Family Caregivers.

There are three ways to register: by mail, fax, or online. For a copy of the agenda go to http://www.aoa.gov/press/events/Summit_Agenda_8_25.pdf. To register visit <http://www.hsrnet.net/AoASummit/>.

September Town Hall Listening Session in North Carolina

Join us and be heard at the next Administration on Aging Town Hall Listening Session on September 12, 2003, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This session will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina in conjunction with the North Carolina Conference on Aging. The Assistant Secretary for Aging invites older people, their families and caregivers, and members of the National Aging Services Network to comment on critical issues that affect older adults and their caregivers. Persons must pre-register in order to provide oral comments at the listening session. For more information about the session and about how to register to give oral comments visit www.aoa.gov/press/town_hall_meetings/thm.asp.

AoA Partnerships for Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

HHS is emphasizing the importance of prevention activities through its second annual "Take Your Loved One to the Doctor Day," on September 16. HHS recommends regular visits to the doctor, dentist, and pharmacist, in order to ensure healthy living and healthy aging for all Americans, especially among those who are disadvantaged. Especially troubling is the fact that as many as one in five older Americans who live independently use prescription medicines considered potentially inappropriate. In response to this phenomenon, AoA plans to celebrate "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day." AoA is partnering with the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged (NCBA), the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE) and pharmacists and advanced pharmacy students in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. area to increase awareness of medication management and safety for older area residents. An event will be held on Tuesday, September 9 in Washington, D.C., where the Assistant Secretary for Aging will make opening remarks, followed by a presentation and round table discussion led by area pharmacists. For more information about Take Your Loved One to the Doctor Day go to: <http://www.healthgap.omhrc.gov/>.

AoA also is partnering with EyeCare America to help bridge the healthcare gap for medically underserved communities. By age 65, one in three Americans has some form

of vision-limiting disease. Unfortunately, many aren't aware they have a disease, or believe poor vision is a natural part of the aging process. The Senior's EyeCare Program offers eye exams and care to seniors who are without an ophthalmologist (medical eye doctor). Call 1 (800) 222-EYES (3937), 24 hours, seven days a week, year-round to see if you, a loved one, or a friend aged 65 and older is eligible to receive a referral for an eye exam and care. To see how your agency might join in the efforts for this campaign, please go to EyeCare America's Web site at www.eyecareamerica.org.

Policy and Program Updates

HHS Awards \$12.5 Million to Expand Alzheimer's Disease Demonstrations

On August 13, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced \$12.5 million in grants to develop innovative approaches to provide care for people with Alzheimer's disease and support for their family caregivers. The grants announced today are part of the Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States Program sponsored and funded by AoA. The program works to improve the responsiveness of home- and community-based services to persons with dementia and their caregivers. It supports the goals of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative, a government-wide framework for helping provide people with disabilities the tools they need to fully access and participate in their communities. The demonstration grants focus on expanding the availability of diagnostic and support services to people with Alzheimer's disease and improving outreach and service delivery to low-income, minority, and rural families that are traditionally underserved. The awards will support seven new demonstration programs and also support the continuation of projects in 32 other states. Descriptions of the new projects and details about the continuing grants are available at http://www.aoa.gov/alz/Public/alzabout/demo_projects/current.asp.

AoA Awards \$9.4 Million for Senior Medicare Patrol Projects

On August 26, AoA awarded \$9.4 million to 25 new Senior Medicare Patrol projects and 32 continuations. Through these projects, state and local nonprofit organizations will help older Americans become better health care consumers by identifying potential and unintended Medicare and Medicaid billing errors and potentially deliberate abuses. For the first time, Senior Medicare Patrol Projects operate in all states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The project roster also includes a faith-based organization and a Federally recognized tribe for the first time. The Senior Medicare Patrol projects teach volunteer retired professionals, such as doctors, nurses, accountants, investigators, law enforcement personnel, attorneys and teachers, to help Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries be better health care consumers. Since 1997, these projects and other AoA grants have trained more than 35,000 volunteers and conducted more than 200,000 training sessions in which nearly 1.1 million Medicare beneficiaries were educated. More than \$81 million in Medicare and Medicaid funds have been recouped through closed investigations. For more information about the Administration on Aging's Senior Medicare Patrol grants, go to <http://www.aoa.gov/smp/index.asp>.

Special Transportation Section Now on the AoA Web Site

The AoA Web Site has a new addition! We are happy to provide a special section of our website devoted specifically to the issues of senior transportation and older drivers. It is one of many activities stemming from the Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Transit Administration and AoA. You will find information about our partner agencies; senior driver issues and educational tools; research and data related to senior transportation; promising practices in transportation service coordination; and the development of state and local transportation plans. Be sure to check out the Stakeholder Involvement information. You can provide us your input on the website and your ideas and experiences about improving the coordination of transportation services for America's seniors. Please check it out by going to:

<http://www.aoa.gov/prof/transportation/transportation.asp>.

New CDC Report on Physical Activity

Secretary Thompson announced a new CDC report of physical activity levels on August 14. The report reveals that the majority of American adults aren't physically active at levels that promote health. Only 45 percent of Americans are getting the CDC recommended 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. This problem is even more pronounced among older Americans who are less physically active than other U.S. adults. The data comes from a state-based survey that includes a new broader definition of exercise, which covers moderate everyday activities such as gardening, vacuuming, and brisk walking in addition to traditional forms. American adults need to increase their level and frequency of weekly physical activity. By doing so, Americans will improve the health of the nation, decrease the rate of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke, and add to the quality of the lives of Americans, including older adults. For a copy of this report visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5232.pdf>.

Submit an Abstract for The Second National Steps to a HealthierUS Summit

HHS has recently announced the Second National Steps to a HealthierUS Summit be held March 18-19, 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland. Conveners are inviting abstracts for the Second National Steps to a HealthierUS Summit. The deadline for submitting abstracts is October 31, 2003. The *Steps to a HealthierUS* initiative, launched by HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson earlier this year is a bold new initiative that envisions a healthy, strong U.S. population supported by a healthcare system in which diseases are prevented when possible, controlled when necessary and treated when appropriate. This initiative is a shift in the traditional approach to the health of Americans, moving from a disease care system to a healthcare system. The summit conveners wish to develop a diverse and substantive program with presenters from a wide range of individuals, organizations, universities, communities, and businesses to help focus and stimulate the variety of activities that are needed to achieve the national health goal of helping Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives. AoA participates as a full partner and is taking an active role in designing the *Steps to a Healthier US* initiative. Our participation as a steering committee member will help ensure that the initiative serves all populations and ages. We encourage you to consider submitting an abstract to present your work at this highly visible event. Presenting at the Summit represents a key opportunity to get aging prevention issues on the national agenda, a

crucial important step because of the rapidly growing aging population. For more information or to submit an abstract go to: <http://www.healthierus.gov/steps/index.html>.

Making A Difference

Washington, DC Office on Aging Offers Summer Camp for Older Grandparents

This summer, District of Columbia residents participated in the United Generations Camp, a respite program for grandparents and other older persons aged 60 and older raising children. The camp is a world away from the city located in a rustic setting among the pine trees of Southern Maryland. Some campers brought their grandchildren who camp counselors cared for while grandparents relaxed and enjoyed a much-needed break. Besides the usual camp activities, campers received support for their caregiving. They attended a seminar about handling stress and their children's behavior, a nurse-led workshop on high-blood pressure control, and a Caregiver Survival Kit that included blood pressure measurement tools and the book, *And Thou Shalt Honor: The Caregiver's Companion*. AOA funded this camp through the National Family Caregiver Support Program. The District of Columbia Office on Aging and the DC Parks and Recreation Department co-sponsored this event this summer for the second year. The Washington Post highlighted the United Generations Camp as a unique and much appreciated service in a "Camp Caregiver" article published Sunday, August 12. For more information contact mailto:sherlyn.taylor@dc.gov.

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.

Of Interest

Resources from the National Institute on Aging

A free booklet is now available from the National Institute on Aging that explains what scientists are learning about aging in easy-to-understand language. *Aging Under The Microscope: Biological Quest* is a new publication that includes the latest findings from the top researchers in the biology of aging. This 50-page booklet offers details on the progress scientists are making in understanding the aging process and how their findings may help us move closer to the ultimate goal of promoting health and independence throughout the lifespan. NIA also is currently offering its *free* 80-page guide entitled, *Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging*. It is designed to assist older persons in starting a safe and effective fitness program. The NIA is part of the National Institute of Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The NIA leads the nation's research on aging. For these publications and other information on aging contact the NIA Information Center: by phone at 1 (800) 222-2225, e-mail to niaic@jbs1.com, or by visiting: <http://www.nia.nih.gov/>

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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