

AGEWISE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA COUNCIL ON AGING

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VISION STATEMENT

To be the premier organization advancing Florida's diverse aging interests.



MISSION

The Florida Council on Aging is committed to serving Florida's diverse aging interests through education, information-sharing and advocacy.

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2008 Legislative Session Opens with Uncertainty

The 2007 and 2008 Florida Council on Aging conference themes referenced the positive aspects of Change. Under the heading of “be careful what you ask for because you may get it”, look for the 2009 conference theme to include terms like stability, consistency and let’s return to the ‘good old days’. Yet, seriously, those times are now history and we all now know that the future will be very different. The 2008 Legislative Session will be a factor in designing that future, but not the only one.

FCOA, fulfilling its role as the umbrella membership organization for persons and organizations with interests in aging, collected the aging legislative priorities of most of the statewide organizations. Areas of complete or strong agreement are:

Community Care for the Elderly -- Increase the state general revenue funding for Community Care for the Elderly. The consensus is that the CCE program is both cost-effective and essential to helping older persons remain in their homes and that lack of funding to provide services exacerbates those persons long term care needs. As of January 30, 2008, 17,053 persons were on the waiting list for services. Governor Crist’s budget includes an increase of \$2,070,000 which is projected to serve 575 additional persons (per client annual cost: \$3,600). The Florida Association of Area Agencies on Aging calls for an increase of at least 10 percent (\$4.3 million increase), which would serve an additional 1,200 persons per year at the DOEA rate. The Community Care for the Elderly Coalition endorses an increase of \$11 million, which would serve an additional 3,055 clients per year, using DOEA’s calculation of \$3,600 per client.

Medicaid Reform -- Delay any expansion of Medicaid Reform Pilot Projects. The Agency for Health Care Administration Inspector General recommended that the State undertake no expansion of Medicaid reform until the deficiencies are addressed. Some further recommend that there be no further expansion until a comprehensive, third-party evaluation is conducted and the results are considered.

Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative -- Governor Crist’s budget recommends an increase of \$837,233 for respite services for 200 additional seniors.

Aged and Disabled Adult Medicaid Waiver – An increase of \$6,292,534 is recommended by Governor Crist to serve an additional 770 crisis clients.

Increases in the Governor’s budget for DOEA total \$10,860,561. In addition to the items listed above, the budget includes increases of \$931,136 for technology for the CARES program staff and \$729,658 for 16 additional staff in the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program. These staff supports the work of 300 ombudsmen who investigate and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, the state’s 160,000 long-term care residents. This work is essential to quality in long term care facilities, as is support for the nursing home staffing levels.

The Florida Council on Aging has compiled the priorities of most of the statewide organizations that support aging issues. To receive a copy of this document please email your request to moreinfo@fcoa.org with the subject line ‘Request for Legislative Priorities.’



Message from the President

As I sit writing this article, people in Florida are voting in the Presidential Primary. It seems that senior issues are seldom part of the debate, and this is true of both political parties. 2008 is a pivotal year in so many ways. The issues confronting seniors are at times overwhelming, and many of the issues we were dealing with in 2007 are still with us and demand our attention.

We are once again looking toward the 2008 Florida Legislative Session and all the challenges and opportunities that it brings. Many issues, from increasing CCE general revenue funding for services, to adequate funding for Aging Resource Centers, will hopefully be addressed. One thing I'm sure of, seniors in the state of Florida are a force to be reckoned with. In a recent article, I read the following concerning Florida's seniors:

- There are 4.1 million seniors in Florida.
- Retirement industry is the second largest industry in Florida.
- \$135 billion in spending power.
- 50 percent of all new home construction is for seniors.
- 2.8 billion net tax benefit after services are rendered from persons 60+.
- 31 percent of Floridians age 60 and older are registered to vote.
- 43 percent of voters in the 2006 election were age 60 and older.

You can see by the numbers above that our elected officials can not afford to ignore the needs of the seniors in our great state. There is a saying "go where you're celebrated and not where you're tolerated." This is a lesson our officials will learn if they ignore the needs of our senior population.

At FCOA, advocacy is one of our core values and it is vital that we hold our elected officials accountable. FCOA is made up of many disciplines within the aging network, and together, we can make sure that senior issues are part of the political landscape. The challenges will be great this year, but the opportunities will be also.

If we find ourselves tiring and becoming overwhelmed, we must ask ourselves, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time".

D. Dave Lynn

Florida Council on Aging

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FLORIDA COUNCIL ON AGING

Positions on Legislative Issues 2008

BILL: N/A

ISSUE: Support the increase in CCE general revenue funding.

SUPPORT: Yes

COMMENTS: FCOA has supported this issue since 2002.

BILL: State

ISSUE: Local Options Bill - Authorizes each county to create independent special district to provide funding for services for seniors.

SUPPORT: To Be Determined

COMMENTS: FCOA supported this issue in 2005 and 2006. The Advocacy Committee will follow any progress on the Local Options Bill.

BILL: State

ISSUE: Medically Needy and Meds-AD program.

SUPPORT: Yes

COMMENTS: FCOA voted to support these programs during 2003. Additional information on these programs is being sought and will be forthcoming. These programs are up for approval/funding every year.

BILL: State

ISSUE: Support adequate and timely funding to Aging Resource Centers.

SUPPORT: Yes

COMMENTS: FCOA voted to support this issue on February 9, 2007.

BILL: State

ISSUE: Medicaid Reform (Florida Senior Care)

SUPPORT: No

COMMENTS: FCOA voted to not support Medicaid Reform (Florida Senior Care).

BILL: Federal

ISSUE: LIHEAP - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Its purpose is "to assist low-income households, particularly those with the lowest income, that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, primarily in meeting their immediate home energy needs."

SUPPORT: To Be Determined

COMMENTS: FCOA recognizes that the LIHEAP legislation passed in 2006. Funding was released in January 2008. FCOA continues to support the funding of LIHEAP.

The Administration On Aging Gateway to the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006

In June of 2007 the Administration on Aging (AoA) announced the online 'Gateway to the Older Americans Act 2006 Amendments.' The Gateway at http://aoa.gov/oa2006/Main_Site/index.aspx provides an outline summary of new provisions in the Act, statutory text for each new provision (new/revised language only), and technical assistance resource links.

On the AoA Gateway site you will find:

- **The Gateway to the Older Americans Act** that includes:
 - An outline summary of 2006 Amendments to the Act;
 - Statutory text for each new provision of the Act (*new/revised language only*);
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs);
 - Technical Assistance (TA)/resource links; and
 - An unofficial compilation of the OAA as amended in 2006 (straight read).
- **A statement from Assistant Secretary for Aging Josefina G. Carbonell**, regarding the passage of the 2006 Amendments;
- Two "unofficial" compilations of the OAA:
 - A **strike-through version** showing all deleted and new language; and
 - A **straight read** of the OAA text with the revisions and deletions incorporated.

For select provisions, the site now also includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), as well as, the opportunity for users to submit their own questions regarding the 2006 Amendments. The full list of current FAQs may be accessed at http://aoa.gov/oa2006/Main_Site/resources/faqs.aspx. In addition, links to specific FAQs are included at the bottom of various "provision" (or topic) pages such as Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Evidence-Based Health Promotion Disease Prevention Programs, Self Directed Care and other programmatic questions.

The FAQs found on the website may be helpful in implementing long-term care reforms at the State level, planning and service areas and local communities. AoA will be adding FAQs periodically so AoA recommends users check back regularly for updates.

Tax and Budget Reform Commission Actions Would Impact Non-Profits

The Florida Constitution calls for the appointment of a Budget and Tax Reform Commission every twenty years. In the storm of tax reform in the state, the Committees of the Commission are moving to make significant changes that could have costly impacts on not-for-profit organizations. While the Commission's final recommendations will undergo two approval processes: first to the 2008 Legislature for approval and then to the voters in November as constitutional amendments, major changes to the recommendations of such a prestigious Commission would be unlikely. Constitutional amendments approved

by the voters are not reconsidered for twenty years. The advice is: influence the work of the Commission's Committees, where the substantive work is being done, now!

The Finance and Taxation Committee, chaired by former Senate President John McKay, is considering a plan to eliminate \$8 billion in school property taxes and replace those funds by raising the sales tax by a penny and eliminating the sales tax exemptions on all products except raw food, residential (long term) rents, heating fuel and utilities, (skilled) health care services and prescription drugs.

All not-for-profits need to be alert to potential Commission actions which would eliminate your organizations' exemptions from paying sales taxes on all of your purchases. For aging services providers, the meals you provide to private pay clients do not fall within the "raw food" category and most of the health care services provided are not "skilled".

Go to the Commission's website: www.floridatbrc.org and learn more about their proposals. The members are listed on the website. The proposed amendment referenced above is #CP0002 under Member Proposals.

Those 50+ Can Flex Their Voting Muscle During the 2008 Election

By Lori K. Parham, State Director, AARP Florida

More than 50 percent of all Florida voters are age 50 and older. More than half of those – 2.9 million – are members of AARP. Statistics show most older voters, particularly those who are members of AARP, tend to vote in larger numbers. That means AARP members, in all likelihood, will play a decisive role in the outcome of the 2008 presidential election. There are several reasons why your voice is even more important in the coming election.

Most (96 percent) people age 50+ use Medicare as their primary source of health care insurance, but Medicare premiums have more than doubled since 2000 and are close to \$100 a month, making it more difficult for older Americans – especially those on fixed incomes – to afford.

Retirement also is becoming more difficult to afford. Some people 50+ have lost traditional pensions when corporations face their own financial problems. According to the Employee Benefits Research Institute, Florida ranks dead last among the 50 states in the percentage of employees covered by employer-sponsored pensions.

Health care and lifetime financial security are issues that are critical to all Americans. Skyrocketing health care costs and lack of access to affordable health care is a crisis in this nation. Businesses are struggling to stay competitive due to the enormous expense of health care. Small businesses, in particular find it hard to afford insurance or retirement plans for employees.

Only one in five American workers is still covered by a traditional pension. Half of all workers eligible for an employer savings program like a 401K are not even enrolled in such a program, and many who have saved for retirement have a long way to go.

That's why we're asking voters 50+ to join Divided We Fail, a national initiative aimed at encouraging discussion and debate from presidential candidates on health care and lifetime financial security. We want to hear how candidates, if elected, will work across partisan lines to curb skyrocketing health care costs and to ensure that all Americans will be able to save for retirement. Right now, instead of solutions, we get partisan gridlock in Washington when it comes time to make substantial change.

The good news is that we have the power to impact change. We can join with millions of other Americans across the nation to demand change from our elected officials and presidential candidates during the 2008 election on these two critical issues.

These are not issues only for Democrats or for Republicans – these are issues for all Americans. It is critically important that we work to get the presidential candidates to focus on providing workable, realistic solutions that appeal to a broad range of Americans. Learn more about how you can be involved at <http://www.dividedwefail.org>.

Divided, we fail. Together we can do anything.

Get Tested. Save Your Life.

Colorectal Cancer: #3 Cancer Killer in U.S. is Largely Preventable
American Cancer Society Encourages Men and Women to Get Tested

By Dennis R. Laffer, MD

If you could take a simple test that could save your life, would you do it? The American Cancer Society (ACS) is raising awareness that colorectal cancer, commonly referred to as colon cancer — the third leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women in the United States — is largely preventable. People are suffering and dying needlessly because they are not taking control of their own healthcare and getting a colonoscopy. March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. ACS is encouraging people to get tested during this month.

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2007 (the latest statistics available), approximately 154,000 Americans would be diagnosed with colon cancer, and more than 52,000 would die, a number that could be cut in half if Americans followed ACS screening recommendations. In Florida in 2007, it's estimated 11,420 people were diagnosed with colon cancer and 3,530 people died.

“People who are over 50 have the ability to avoid developing colon cancer or to find the disease in an early stage,” says John Chaperon, president of the American Cancer Society's Florida Division. “Testing can find polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. The tests can also detect cancer in an early stage. If a cancer is found, treating it before symptoms develop dramatically increases the likelihood of a cure. When found at its earliest, most treatable stage, colon cancer has a 90 percent survival rate.” It is important to point out that colonoscopy is highly effective in the detection of polyps

and cancer, but it is not 100% accurate. It remains in 2008 as the best screening modality that is available provided the examiner performs the best exam and the patient has the best bowel preparation.

Colon cancer affects men and women equally. African Americans have the highest incidence rate and death rate from colon cancer of any racial or ethnic group in the US. Colon cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in both Hispanic/Latino men and women.

Colon cancer tests can enable doctors to detect and remove hidden growths, called polyps, before they become cancerous. The tests can also detect cancer in an early stage. Early colon cancer often has no symptoms, which is why testing is so important. Getting tested is especially critical for Americans age 50 and over as more than 90 percent of colon cancer cases are diagnosed in people over the age of 50. If you have a history of colon cancer in your family, get tested at age 40. African-Americans should begin their screenings at age 45.

The American Cancer Society has published a new book, **QuickFACTS™ Colon Cancer**. The book provides a detailed summary of colon cancer and then goes on to discuss risks factors, causes, prevention and detection, diagnosis and staging, conventional treatment options and complementary and alternative methods, life after treatment, and the latest research, in an easy-to-read format. For more information anytime call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

The **Florida Patient Safety Corporation (FPSC)** is dedicated to continuously improving patient safety in the state by serving as a learning and research organization. FPSC fulfills its mission of assisting health care providers to enhance the quality and safety of health care and reduce harm to patients by working with other patient safety programs and organizations committed to patient safety. In carrying out its mission, FPSC will participate in Patient Safety Awareness Week March 2-8 along with hospitals, healthcare organizations and patient groups across the globe. The theme of the week, *Patient Safety: A Road Taken Together* emphasizes a collective effort for safer health care through partnership among providers, patients, families and communities. This week is intended to raise public awareness about the work being done to improve patient safety and the importance of effective partnering to these improvement efforts.

Please visit our web site www.floridapatientssafetycorp.com for more information on Patient Safety Awareness Week and other programs.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE AGING NETWORK?

2008 Florida Conference on Aging: Better Together. Celebrating Change.

August 11 – 14, 2008 at the Renaissance Resort Sea World, Orlando

Planning for the 2008 Florida Conference on Aging is in full swing. Robert Putnam, author of *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* and *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, is confirmed to be the opening plenary speaker. Tom Nelson, Chief Operating Officer for AARP will present at the Tuesday morning plenary with Senator Martinez (invited) and Senator Nelson (invited). There are more great speakers being invited and exciting events being planned. Visit www.fcoa.org for the latest updates.

How can you help make this year's conference even better? By submitting a workshop proposal! YOU know what types of information your colleagues are looking for. YOU are on the front lines searching for funding, implementing programs and providing services. YOU can help make this year's workshops the most useful for fellow members of the aging network. The Call for Presentations has been mailed and can be accessed at www.fcoa.org. Proposals must be submitted by mail and postmarked by February 29, 2008.

Member News

Norm Bungard was honored by the Church Women United (CWU), the local branch of a national women's group with their first ever Humanitarian award. The plaque reads: "Human Rights Award Presented to Norm Bungard For many years of sacrificial service to the people of St. Petersburg by the Church Women United January 19, 2008". Norm volunteers his time with many groups including, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Habitat for Humanity and the National Silver Haired Congress. Mr. Bungard has lent his time and dedication to so many organizations in his community and beyond that it would be impossible to name them all. Congratulations on this very special honor.

The **Florida Department of Elder Affairs** (DOEA) Elder Abuse Prevention Program was recognized in the February Newsletter

of the National Center on Elder Abuse. The DOEA Elder Abuse Prevention Program staff and the DOEA Communications staff developed a new campaign to educate the public about elder abuse. To read more, visit http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/NCEARoot/Main_Site/Resources/Newsletter/current_newsletter.pdf

FCOA would like to express their deepest condolences to **Dean LaFrentz** and his family for the loss of his wife in January after an extended illness.

Neighborly Care Network in St. Petersburg is the first FCOA Organizational Member to take advantage of the new tiered membership dues structure. For 5 years Neighborly will not have to worry about renewing their membership and multi-year membership renewals are discounted. Want to know more? Call FCOA at 850-222-8877 or email at moreinfo@fcoa.org.

Welcome New Members!

(Since October 2007)

Harlan C. Bieley, M.D.; Healthy Aging Medical Center; Palm Beach

Lisa Cooke; Lee County Library Books by Mail; Estero

Barbara Gale; Hanley Center; West Palm Beach

Ted Granger; United Way of Florida; Tallahassee

Maureen Kelly; West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging, Inc.; Tampa

William Mann; University of Florida; Gainesville

LuMarie Polivka-West; Florida Health Care Association; Tallahassee

Maureen Sander; Hanley Center; West Palm Beach

Bonnie Schillinger; Seniors Today; Ormond Beach

Elizabeth Serapin; Orlando

Elizabeth Vongxaiburana; University of South Florida; St. Petersburg

Virginia Yates; Markham, Norton, Mosteller & Wright, P.A CPA; Fort Myers

RESOURCES & REPORTS

Medication Use Safety Training for Seniors™

The National Council on Patient Information and Education - a non-profit coalition of more than 100 organizations working to improve communication on the appropriate use of medicines - has launched **Medication Use Safety Training for Seniors™ (MUST for Seniors™)** a national education awareness campaign to promote safe and appropriate medicine use among America's older adults. For more information about the program and safely using medicines, visit the **MUST for Seniors™** web site at www.mustforseniors.org.

Brookdale Foundation New Publication

The Brookdale Foundation has collaborated with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) on a publication intended to make the aging network across the nation aware of important and successful Relatives as Parents Programs (RAPPs) operated by Area Agencies on Aging. The Foundation hopes this guidebook will encourage the replication of RAPP supportive services to relative caregivers throughout the aging network. You can find this publication, *Promising Practices in Supporting Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children*, on the Foundation Web site <http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/relativesasparents.htm>.

Disability Information

DisabilityInfo.gov (www.disabilityinfo.gov) is a one-stop federal Web site designed to offer people with disabilities access to the information and resources they need to fully participate in the workforce and in their communities. Managed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) (www.dol.gov/odep), DisabilityInfo.gov offers a broad range of valuable information, not only for people with disabilities, but also for older Americans, service providers, caregivers and many others. Several sections of the Web site offer information and resources geared toward older Americans. For example, the Health section features an Aging category with information on Medicare and Medicaid benefits, long-term care providers, support for caregivers and assistive technologies for the aging population.

ON THE WEB...

National Clearinghouse on the Direct Care Workforce

Features include a digital resource library, best practices database, and legislative news. Visit <http://www.directcareclearinghouse.org/index.jsp>.

Caregiving Spending

The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and Evercare have released the "Family Caregiving—What They Spend, What They Sacrifice" study. Learn more at www.caregiving.org/pubs/data.htm.

Florida Discount Drug Card

Governor Crist has launched a Florida Discount Drug Card for Floridians age 60+ and lower income individuals under age 60. The Florida Discount Drug Card is designed to lower the cost of prescriptions for Florida residents who are age 60 and older and without prescription drug coverage; who fall into the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage gap; or who are under age 60, without prescription drug coverage, and with an annual family income of less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level. For more information, call 1-866-341-8894 or visit www.FloridaDiscountDrugCard.com.

Trends in Health and Aging Web site Update

The Trends in Health and Aging site is a comprehensive source of information about the health status, health behaviors, health insurance coverage, health care expenditures, and the use of health services by the aging population in the U.S. It is maintained by NCHS and is supported by the National Institute of Aging of the National Institutes of Health. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/agingact.htm>. National Center for Health Statistics Power Point presentations on major trends and patterns in health and aging, in diabetes for older Americans, in medication spending by older Americans and in patterns of supplemental health insurance coverage for Medicare beneficiaries are available at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/otheract/aging/ppt_english.htm.

Seniors EyeCare Program:

EyeCare America Seniors EyeCare Program ensures that every senior has access to medical eye care and promotes annual, dilated eye exams. The program raises awareness about age-related eye disease, including cataracts, provides free eye care educational materials and facilitates access to eye care at no out-of-pocket cost. The program is designed for people who are US citizens or legal residents, are age 65 and older, have not seen an ophthalmologist in three years or more, and do not belong to an HMO or the VA. People may call the toll-free helpline at 800-222-3937 to request free eye care educational materials and determine if they qualify for care from one of EyeCare America's 7,500+ volunteer ophthalmologists nationwide.

Building Livable Communities

This MetLife study provides tools and examples on how communities can be built to accommodate the changing needs of people. Visit <http://www.n4a.org>.

Falls Information

A new CDC report looks at injuries from falls, and the resulting activity limitations and utilization of health care. To learn more, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad392.pdf>.



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Aging Education Calendar

FCOA Online at:
www.FCOA.org

March 5, 2008: BERKELEY, CA. Creating Aging-Friendly Communities Online Conference - Presentation 3 of 3.
Web conference. Call (510) 642-3285 or visit <http://www.icohere.com/agingfriendly/index.htm> for more information.

March 14-17, 2008: ORLANDO, FL. American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry Conference.
Renaissance at Sea World. Call (301) 654-7850 or visit <http://www.aagpmeeting.org/> for more information.

March 27-30, 2008: WASHINGTON, D.C. Aging in America: 2008 NCOA-ASA Conference.
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel and Omni Shoreham Hotel. Call (415) 974-9675
or visit www.agingconference.org/asav2/conf/jc/jc08/ for more information.

April 4, 2008: MIAMI, FL. Florida Bioethics Network Annual Spring Conference.
Visit <http://www6.miami.edu/ethics/fbn/> for more information.

April 17-20, 2008: ATLANTA, GA. Southern Gerontological Society Conference. Atlanta Sheraton Hotel.
Visit <http://www.wfu.edu/gerontology/sgs> for more information.

Mark Your Calendars Now for the

2008 FLORIDA CONFERENCE ON AGING

AUGUST 11-14 | THE RENAISSANCE ORLANDO RESORT AT SEA WORLD

More information coming soon or visit www.fcoa.org.

To submit a calendar item (statewide, regional, or national), fax info to (850) 222-2575 or e-mail to moreinfo@FCOA.org

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