



**March 2009**

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## Top Stories

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### **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: More Meals for Older Americans**

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Includes \$100 Million for Meals for Older Americans

The recently-passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) includes \$100 million for programs supported by the Administration on Aging that serve meals to senior citizens in need. The programs will provide 14 million meals nationwide over the next two fiscal years.

Through the ARRA, the Administration on Aging (AoA) received \$65 million for Congregate Nutrition Services provided at senior centers and other community sites, \$32 million for Home Delivered Nutrition Services delivered to frail elders at home and \$3 million for Native American Nutrition Programs. The funding will be distributed to 56 states and territories and 246 tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations.

To learn more about programs supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/recovery>.

### **HHS Report Highlights the Need for Action This Year on Health Reform; Website Gives the Public a Voice in the Discussion**

With the release of the HHS special report Americans Speak on Health Reform: Report on Health Care Community Discussions and the launch of the new website <http://healthreform.gov/>, the Obama Administration turned its attention to health reform. Both actions preceded the Administration's March 5 Health Reform Summit, at which the President gave assurance that the discussion would include voices from all sides of the health reform debate.

The report summarizes comments from the thousands of Americans who last December responded to then President-elect Obama's call to host Health Care Community Discussions to assess the seriousness of the problems and identify solutions. It also highlights the need for action this year to reform health care. The website also allows Americans to share their thoughts about health reform with the Obama Administration and sign a statement in support of President Obama's commitment to enacting comprehensive health reform this year. For more information visit the website <http://healthreform.gov/>.

### **Making the Case for Long-Term Care Services and Supports: CMS' Thomas E. Hamilton Testifies before Senate Special Committee on Aging**

On March 4, 2009, Thomas E. Hamilton, Director, Survey and Certification Group from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) testified before a Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing on health care reform which

focused on long term care. In his testimony, Mr. Hamilton provided an overview of the priorities of the Obama Administration to improve the delivery of services to older adults, caregivers and individuals. Mr. Hamilton discussed the services that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides to support Americans of all ages who require long term care.

The U.S. Administration on Aging's (AoA) efforts to provide home and community services to more than 10 million older persons through the Older Americans Act was highlighted. Other programs discussed were various Federal and state partnerships that offer information, access, flexibility and options tailored to individual needs such as the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), AoA's Nursing Home Diversion Program, Real Choice Systems Grants for Community Living, and the Money Follows the Person Grants. AoA was asked to attend to support CMS and respond to questions from the Congressional panel. To learn more about the hearing go to [http://aging.senate.gov/hearing\\_detail.cfm?id=309028&](http://aging.senate.gov/hearing_detail.cfm?id=309028&)

### **March Is National Nutrition Month® – “Eat Right”**

National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the American Dietetic Association (ADA), one of the Administration on Aging's (AoA) partners in nutritional health. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. The theme for National Nutrition Month is “Eat Right.”

Eating right and being physically active are keys to good health at any time of life, but especially as you grow older. The best way to give your body balanced nutrition is by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day while staying within your calorie needs. A healthy eating plan emphasizes: fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat milk and milk products; lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts; and is low in saturated fats, trans fat, cholesterol, salt and added sugars. This is not always an easy recipe to follow.

Because food costs have risen and there is an economic downturn, many older Americans, their families and caregivers are having difficulties in eating healthy meals, and are having to make decisions between buying food and paying bills. The meals provided through the Older Americans Act with the help of our national aging services network and the connections to social activities and health promotion programs, make a big difference in the lives of millions of people.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, signed into law on February 17, 2009 by President Obama, includes \$100 million for meals and nutrition services for older Americans to help them maintain their health and independence (See previous article on ARRA). These funds will help at-risk seniors improve their nutritional habits as well as their quality of life in communities across the United States.

To learn about the AoA Elderly Nutrition Program click  
[http://www.aoa.gov/press/prodsmats/fact/pdf/fs\\_nutrition.doc](http://www.aoa.gov/press/prodsmats/fact/pdf/fs_nutrition.doc).

To visit the American Dietetic Association (ADA) website visit  
<http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/index.html>

To find information and resources that provide background and support for nutrition education efforts with older adults, including Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs), statistics, reports and guidelines, brochures, and online tools click

[http://snap.nal.usda.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?info\\_center=15&tax\\_level=3&tax\\_subject=275&topic\\_id=1336&level3\\_id=5216#General%20Information](http://snap.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=15&tax_level=3&tax_subject=275&topic_id=1336&level3_id=5216#General%20Information).

For other nutritional tips go to:

<http://www.niapublications.org/agepages/nutrition.asp>

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## **AoA News**

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### **Kentucky and Arkansas Seniors Receive Disaster Recovery Assistance**

HHS Acting Assistant Secretary for Aging Edwin L. Walker announced that Kentucky and Arkansas recently received \$20,000 each to help frail and at-risk seniors recover from the ice storms and damaging high winds which affected much of their states earlier this year.

The funds, requested by the states, will provide elderly storm victims with continued community services so they can maintain their health and living status. These services include meals, transportation to pick up prescriptions and attend medical appointments, heavy chore services and continued clean-up of debris.

The Administration on Aging (AoA) has been working closely with the Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Arkansas Division of Aging and Adult Services and their community-based aging networks since the Presidential disaster declarations were issued to provide assistance. AoA responded immediately to the states' recent requests for federal assistance for seniors.

“The grants will help provide our seniors with some of the assistance they still need to get back on their feet,” Acting Assistant Secretary Walker said. “The ice storms hit the states at an especially challenging time in our nation’s economy -- serving as an additional threat to some especially > vulnerable people. The services provided with these funds will help seniors to remain in their communities and, for some, avoid costly hospitalization or nursing home stays.” He continued, “We are so appreciative of the heroic efforts of both Kentucky and Arkansas’ state and community-based organizations as well as everyday people who came to the aid of their neighbors in need.”

For more information on AoA's Emergency Preparedness Activities, please visit <http://www.aoa.gov/prof/preparedness/preparedness.aspx>

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## **HHS News**

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### **HHS Launches Social Media Website – Tests It with Peanut Butter Recalls**

The power of social media is being tapped by the Department of Health and Human Services, its Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and its Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to spread important information about the recall of certain peanut butter and peanut-containing products that are associated with the recent Salmonella Typhimurium outbreaks.

The heart of the outreach effort is an FDA-maintained database listing all recalled peanut products. The database (<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm>) can be searched by brand name or browsed by product category, i.e., cracker-product recalls. A widget has been created so news, parenting, health care and other concerned parties can access the database information directly from their Web sites. AoA has a link to this information on its home page (<http://www.aoa.gov>).

The social media outreach effort is being directed by the Department's new Social Media Center, which promotes the collaborative use of social media tools to better communicate health and human service information. Many of these resources are available in both English and Spanish. You will hear more about these efforts in the very near future. Visit the Social Media webpage at <http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia>.

### **Have you visited Healthfinder.Gov yet?**

HHS has created Healthfinder.gov, a government Web site where you will find information and tools to help you and those you care about stay healthy. Healthfinder.gov has resources on a wide range of health topics selected from over 1,600 government and non-profit organizations to bring you the best, most reliable health information on the Internet. Take a look! <http://www.healthfinder.gov/Healthfinder.gov>

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## **Federal Funding Opportunities**

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### **CDC to Commit Approximately \$5 Million in FY2009 to Fund Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**

This funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is intended to solicit applications that support translation of health protection research into public health practice with an emphasis on achieving health equity. This FOA will also contribute to achieving the health promotion and disease prevention objectives

of "Healthy People 2010" and to measuring program performance as stipulated by the Government Performance and Review Act (GPRA).

Please note this announcement contains a specific section on older adults. Excerpt: The U.S. population is aging at a rate unprecedented in the nation's history. Nearly 29% of Americans are 50 years old or older (CDC [2003]). The current growth in the number and proportion of older adults has far-reaching implications for the US public health system and will increase the demands on US health care systems and the need for social services and long-term care. It is essential for public health to focus on opportunities that will prevent or delay onset of disease, injury, and disability. Among the most critical areas for translation research are preventive services and other evidence-based interventions for preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability in the aging population.

Approximately 10-12 applications will be funded. The average award amount will be \$425,000 in total costs for a 12 month budget period for up to three years. The approximate total three year project period funded amount is \$1,350,000. The anticipated start date for new awards is September 1, 2009. For more information, contact CDC at 770-488-2700 or PGOTIM@cdc.gov. For more information on this announcement, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/od/pgo/funding/CD09-001.htm>

IMPORTANT DATES: **Letter of Intent due by March 23, 2009**. Application due by April 21, 2009.

### **SAMHSA Accepting Applications for \$1.5 Million in Grants for Supportive Housing Services**

The HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is accepting applications for fiscal year 2009 grants for the Services in Supportive Housing program. The purpose of this program is to help prevent or reduce chronic homelessness by funding services in coordination with existing permanent supportive housing programs and resources for individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness.

SAMHSA expects that up to \$1.5 million will be available for up to 4 grants of approximately \$400,000 per grant for up to five years. The grants will be administered by SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services. Entities that operate HUD-funded permanent-supportive housing or other comparable programs are eligible to apply. For more information call SAMHSA's Information Line at 1-877-SAMHSA7 [TDD: 1 800-487-4889] or by downloading the application at [http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/2009/sm\\_09\\_007.aspx](http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/2009/sm_09_007.aspx). DUE DATE: April 17, 2009.

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### **More Aging News**

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## **NCOA Award Grants to Create 10 Benefits Enrollment Centers**

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has just announced grants to 10 organizations nationwide for the purpose of finding and enrolling older people and younger adults with disabilities who have limited means into public benefits programs.

Awarded through NCOA's National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment (<http://www.CenterforBenefits.org>) funded by the Administration on Aging (AoA), the grants support the development of person-centered community-based systems for outreach and enrollment into public benefits through the creation of local and state Benefits Enrollment Centers (BECs). The BECs will reach and assist older people and younger adults with disabilities throughout the country, who may qualify for but are not yet enrolled in programs that help pay for prescription drugs, medical care, food or utilities. Visit <http://www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=65&detail=2764> for more details.

## **New Website for BenefitsCheckUp**

To assist people who need help paying for food, the National Council on Aging has enhanced BenefitsCheckUp with a new Web-based service that provides easy access to information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program), in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Check out the website at <http://www.benefitscheckup.org/snap.cfm>.

## **NTIA to Move Quickly to Get DTV Converter Box Coupons in the Mail**

On March 5, 2009, the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced that the agency has begun to clear its waiting list for requests to the TV Converter Box Coupon Program as a result of additional funds provided by Congress.

NTIA has made several improvements to the TV Converter Box Coupon Program that will help consumers prepare for the shut off of analog broadcasts by June 12, 2009, and has additional improvements planned for the coming weeks. These changes are a result of the DTV Delay Act and made possible through funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. For more details on the updates go to [http://www.ntia.doc.gov/press/2009/DTV\\_ClearsWaitList\\_090305.html](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/press/2009/DTV_ClearsWaitList_090305.html)

## **DTV Transition Date Is Now June 12, 2009 – Are You Ready?**

On February 11, 2009, President Obama signed legislation to delay DTV transition from February 17 to June 12. While the delay is not mandatory, it is

estimated that 681 of the nation's 1,800 TV stations made the switch to DTV by February 17. The remaining stations will be taking advantage of the transitioning between March 14 and June 12.

The Administration supported the date change because of concerns that there are 6.5 million homes that rely on analog TV sets, including older adults and minorities, who would not have been ready on February 17. The Administration wants the government and its partners to do more to help Americans prepare for and navigate the transition. Included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 is \$650 million to complete the DTV transition. The Recovery Act funds will support 12.25 million more new coupons as well as their processing and mailing and will support the Call Center and web portal <https://www.dtv2009.gov>

It will also support targeted outreach efforts to African American and Hispanic communities who are lagging behind other demographic groups in making the switch to digital TV.

The Administration on Aging is a partner in this government-wide effort to educate and assist vulnerable older Americans about the DTV transition. The delay to June 12 gives additional time to assist tens of thousands of older Americans, many of whom live in rural, low-income or minority communities and who maintain a connection to society through television, to prepare for this change.

The following links give useful information on efforts to respond to some DTV Transition challenges.

For updates on the DTV Converter Box Coupon Program and other transition information please go to <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/>.

Keeping Seniors Connected Coalition, comprised of leading national aging organizations including the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), received funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to help vulnerable older Americans across the country successfully transition to digital television.

[http://www.fcc.gov/realaudio/presentations/2009/020509/Sandy\\_Markwood\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.fcc.gov/realaudio/presentations/2009/020509/Sandy_Markwood_Statement.pdf)

Frequently Asked Questions about DTV transition, converter boxes, and the coupon program. [http://www.dtvanswers.com/dtv\\_faqs.html](http://www.dtvanswers.com/dtv_faqs.html).

FCC Web Support to diagnose and resolve converter box problems on line. You must enter your zip code. <https://dtvsupport.fcc.gov/dtvtools/>.

AARP DTV Call Center: AARP is one of 12 organizations selected in early January by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to help prepare over-the-air viewers for the digital transition. AARP is operating a call center to respond to questions, provide information and telephone based technical

assistance help to seniors who need assistance in setting up their converter boxes and antennas. Call toll-free, 1-877-698-8068, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST to ask questions and receive technical assistance. The call center will be operational through March 31, 2009. For more information about AARP's efforts to assist in DTV Transition, visit

[http://www.aarp.org/money/consumer/articles/digital\\_tv.html](http://www.aarp.org/money/consumer/articles/digital_tv.html)

## **Survey Shows 40% of Broadcast TV Stations Have Turned Off Analog Signal**

Although the deadline for the switch from analog to digital television (DTV) has been changed to June 12, many seniors may have been among 6.5 million households with dark TVs on February 18. New statistics show that 40 percent of broadcast television stations turned off their analog transmissions on or before Feb. 17, the original deadline for a nationwide switch to DTV.

To find out which stations are ending analog transmissions before June 12, visit the National Council on Aging's (NCOA) new online community, Senior Centers Online for DTV Transition <<http://www.ncoa.org/dtv>>

## **Study: Boomer Bookends -- Insights into the Oldest and Youngest Boomers**

Just released last month, the MetLife Mature Market Institute (MMI) study, Boomer Bookends: Insights into the Oldest and Youngest Boomers, compares the "leading edge" Boomers (those born in 1946) and the "trailing edge" Boomers (those born in 1964). This is the second year in a row that MMI conducted a nationally representative survey of the oldest boomers, those turning age 63 in 2009. The sample included respondents from the 2007 MMI study, Boomers: Ready to Launch, who agreed to be re-contacted, as well as additional new respondents. To read the entire study and learn its findings, please visit:

<http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/mmi-studies-boomer-bookends.pdf?SCOPE=Met>

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## **Conferences**

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Stay up to date with the latest aging meetings and conferences by visiting the AoA events calendar at:

[http://www.aoa.gov/press/main\\_news/events/events.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/press/main_news/events/events.aspx)

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