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AoA Region VI Staff Recognized for Outstanding Service

At last month's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Award Program in Dallas, Texas, Administration on Aging (AoA) Region VI staff were recognized for their outstanding service. At the ceremony, DHHS Regional Director Marjorie Petty presented the DHHS Regional Director's Leadership Team Award to AoA Aging Services Program Assistant Larry McClendon for his work on the DHHS Tribal Listening Session held earlier this year. Larry was joined by AoA Aging Services Program Specialists Lisa Theirl and Derek Lee in receiving the Team Award also presented by Regional Director Petty for their role in coordinating the first Older Americans Act Reauthorization Listening Forum hosted by Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee in February.

As expressed by Regional VI Administrator Percy Devine at the ceremony, Good job Team AoA Dallas!

States Awarded \$700,000 for Enhanced Access to Legal Services for Older Americans

Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee recently announced the award of \$700,000 to six states and the District of Columbia to help at-risk older Americans have better access to legal services.

Awards of \$100,000 each were made to legal service provider organizations in Alaska, Delaware, Georgia, Massachusetts, Texas, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. These grants will bring aging and legal service delivery systems together to improve efforts to protect the independence, health, and financial security of older adults. Many older individuals are facing critical threats to their independence, including the loss of their homes through foreclosure, the destruction of nest eggs through consumer scams, the risk of elder abuse, the challenges in accessing important public benefits, as well as the prevalence of health care fraud and financial exploitation.

To learn more about this initiative, please go to

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/For_The_Press/pr/archive/2010/July/07_09_10.aspx

For more information on AoA's Legal Services programs, please visit

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/Legal/index.aspx

AoA Awards \$1.6 Million to Help Older Americans Understand and Exercise Their Pension Rights

HHS Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee recently announced more than \$1.6 million in grants to help older Americans understand and exercise their pension rights.

Awards of \$200,000 each have been made to six regional pension counseling projects, covering 27 states, with proposed expansion to include two more states (Indiana and New Mexico) over the three-year grant period. In addition, a National Pension Assistance Resource Center (Resource Center) which will provide critical training and technical support to the projects, as well as to state and area agencies on aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and legal services providers, has been awarded \$421,253.

To learn more about this initiative, please go to

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/For_The_Press/pr/archive/2010/July/07_08_10.aspx

For more information on AoA's Pension Counseling & Information Program, please visit

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/Pension_Counseling/index.aspx

AoA's Social Media Highlight Internet Usage Statistics and Exercise Tips in July

Have you ever wondered what percent of older adults use the Internet and what they do online? You can learn what percent of older adults access the Internet by checking AoA's July widget at

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/Social_Media/index.aspx

If you want to share these statistics with visitors to your site, click the "share" button and the code of the widget will be displayed so you can post it to your website.

Would you like to send an e-card that highlights the health benefits of exercise to a friend or family member? AoA e-cards will highlight the benefits of different physical activities in July. To access these cards click

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/Social_Media/index.aspx

We will be updating you with alerts on new social media content in every E-News issue. If you have any questions or comments on our social media content, please contact Augustina.Howe@aoa.hhs.gov.

Highlights of OAM Celebrations Available Online

A video of the Administration on Aging-sponsored Walk on the National Mall in Washington, DC to celebrate of Older Americans Month (OAM) is now posted on You Tube. To view the video, please go to

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9Y5O9AX36Y&feature=channel>

Photos of the Walk in Washington, DC along with other walks held across the nation in recognition of Older Americans Month are also available. To view the photo gallery, please go to

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/Multimedia/photos/photos.aspx

Other HHS News

More Seniors to Receive One-Time Donut Hole Rebate Checks

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius recently announced the second round of more than 300,000 eligible seniors who have entered the Medicare Part D “donut hole” this year have been mailed their tax-free, one time rebate check for \$250. These one-time rebate checks are the first step in closing the prescription drug coverage gap under the Affordable Care Act. The first round of checks was distributed in the middle of June. As qualifying Medicare recipients “fall into the donut hole,” they will be sent a rebate check by Medicare.

The \$250 checks are being mailed to those Medicare beneficiaries who entered the Medicare Part D donut hole, also known as the coverage gap, in the second quarter of 2010 and are not eligible for Medicare Extra Help (also known as the low-income subsidy or LIS) or enrolled in a qualified retiree prescription drug plan. The donut hole is the period in the prescription drug benefit in which the beneficiary pays 100 percent of the cost of their drugs until they reach the catastrophic coverage phase.

The \$250 check, a provision of the Affordable Care Act, starts to close the donut hole this year, giving much-needed relief to millions of seniors. In 2011, the Affordable Care Act takes an additional step for Medicare beneficiaries in the donut hole by providing them with a 50 percent discount on their brand name medications. Every year from 2012 until 2020, the Affordable Care Act will take progressive steps to close the donut hole.

To read the press release pertaining to this announcement in its entirety, please go to <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2010pres/07/20100708a.html>

HHS Secretary Sebelius Announces New Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan

Department of Health and Human (DHHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius recently announced the establishment of a new Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) that will offer coverage to uninsured Americans who have been unable to obtain health coverage because of a pre-existing health condition.

PCIP, which will be administered either by a state or by DHHS, will provide a new health coverage option for Americans who have been uninsured for at least six months, have been unable to get health coverage because of a health condition, and are a U.S. citizen or are residing in the United States legally. Created under the Affordable Care Act, PCIP is a transitional program until 2014, when insurers will be banned from discriminating against adults with pre-existing conditions, and individuals and small businesses will have access to more affordable private insurance choices through new competitive Exchanges.

For more information on PCIP, including a downloadable pamphlet, please go to <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2010pres/07/20100701a.html>

HHS Launches New Consumer Focused Health Care Website

The recently launched Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website, HealthCare.gov is a powerful new information tool that will give consumers more control over their own health care and allow them to compare their coverage options. It is the first central database of health coverage options, combining information about public programs, from Medicare to the new Pre-Existing Conditions Insurance Plan, with information from more than 1,000 private insurance plans. Consumers can receive information about options specific to their life situation and local community. At the website, consumers will be able to connect to new information and resources that will help them access quality, affordable health care coverage.

To learn more about the website, please go to www.HealthCare.gov

SAMHSA Study Reveals Dramatic Increase in the Proportion of Older Americans Admitted for Substance Abuse Treatment

A recent study sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reveals that between 1992 and 2008 the proportion of substance abuse treatment admissions involving older Americans (aged 50 and older) nearly doubled -- from 6.6 percent of all admissions in 1992 to 12.2 percent in 2008. The study also showed a sharp rise during this period in the proportion of older Americans admissions related to illicit drug abuse -- even though alcohol abuse is still the leading cause for admissions involving this age group.

In addition, while the study showed that over three quarters of all older American treatment admissions initiated use of their primary substance by the age of 25, an increasing proportion of admissions involved substances that had only been initiated within five years prior to admission. In 2008, cocaine abuse was the leading primary cause of admissions involving substances initiated in the past five years (26.2 percent) among older Americans, with prescription drug misuse a close second (25.8 percent).

To read the report, *Changing Substance Abuse Patterns among Older Admissions: 1992 and 2008*, in its entirety, please go to <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k10/229/229OlderAdms2k10.cfm>

FDA Approves First Implantable Miniature Telescope to Improve Sight of AMD patients

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced it has approved the Implantable Miniature Telescope (IMT) to improve vision in some patients with end-stage age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Surgically implanted in one eye, the IMT is a small telescope that replaces the natural lens and provides an image that has been magnified more than two times. AMD, a condition which mainly affects older people, damages the center of the retina (macula) and results in a loss of vision in the center of the visual field. About 8 million people in the United States have AMD and nearly 2 million of them already have significant vision loss, according to the National Eye Institute. AMD can make it difficult or impossible to recognize faces or perform daily tasks such as reading or watching television.

To learn more about this new innovation, please go to <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm218066.htm>

FDA Seeks Public Comment on New Federal Menu Labeling Requirements

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced that it is inviting the public to submit comments and information to help the agency implement a new federal law that requires the posting of calorie content and other nutrition information on menu items at certain chain restaurants and similar retail food operations and vending machines.

To learn more, including how you can submit comments, please go to <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm218134.htm>

Federal Funding Opportunities

Health Care Fraud Prevention Program Expansion and SMP Capacity Building Grants

With this Program Announcement, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Administration on Aging (AoA) seek to expand the capacity of the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program to reach more Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, their families and caregivers, with the message of fraud prevention and identification, with additional funding targeted to designated high fraud states. There are three distinct funding opportunities being made available through this announcement.

Applicants must be a current Senior Medicare Patrol grantee. **The application deadline is August 2, 2010.**

To learn more about this funding opportunity, including which states are eligible for each grant option, please go to

<http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=3sGVM34Z7RH3L31fNJRfP54XhLb11vqckpyNqk66gMhTyJNpX18!-832749192?oppId=55591&mode=VIEW>

More News

The New USA.gov

In marking its 10th anniversary, [USA.gov](http://www.usa.gov) and [GobiernoUSA.gov](http://www.gobiernousa.gov) recently announce a new and improved look to the websites. The new look is based on best practices, usability testing, and suggestions received through the online public dialogue, "Your Voice Matters." The new design will make for easier access to government information and services.

The websites are now structured to showcase some of the most innovative apps and mobile-friendly websites from across the federal government and display the 5 most popular search terms daily.

To view the enhanced websites, please go to www.usa.gov and <http://www.usa.gov/gobiernousa/index.shtml>

July Is UV Safety Month

The sunny days of summer time come with a danger—harm to the eyes from over exposure to the sun. Prolonged exposure to the sun's invisible ultraviolet rays without protection may cause eye conditions that can cause vision loss, such as cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Wearing sunglasses and a wide-brim hat are a good defense system for your eyes against sunlight and harmful UV rays.

To learn more about UV Safety and to access tools to spread the message of sun, fun and safety to your community, please go to <http://www.aao.org/aaoesite/eyemd/uv.cfm>

IL Department on Aging Launches Veterans Independence Program

Appropriately, just days before Independence Day 2010, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) launched its Veterans Independence Program (VIP), a partnership between three Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and three Veterans Administration Medical Centers (VMAC).

VIP is a Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services Program. The program helps veterans, including those younger than 60 years of age, who are at risk of being placed in nursing homes. VIP provides assistance so the veteran may avoid institutionalization and continue to live in his or her home and community.

VIP began when IDoA was asked by the Administration on Aging (AoA) to assist with developing this initiative to provide community based services for veterans in Illinois. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides funding for VAMCs to serve at least 20 to 25 veterans during the course of a year. More veterans may receive assistance each year if their need could be met jointly by VAMCs and AAAs.

For more information on this program, please contact the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs at 217-782-6641 or <http://www.veterans.illinois.gov/homes/homes.htm>

You can also contact the Illinois Department on Aging at 217-785-4477 or <http://www.state.il.us/aging/>

Heat Illnesses and Tips for Preventing Illness During Heat Waves

Older adults (people aged 65 and older) are more likely to experience heat stress than young people during hot weather. They do not adjust to sharp changes in temperature as well as young people. Also they're more likely to take prescription medicines that will weaken their body's ability to regulate its temperature.

Heat-related illnesses that older people may experience include heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Heat stroke is the most serious illness caused by extreme heat.

For more information, including symptoms of heat stroke and tips for preventing heat-related illness, please go to

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Preparedness/Resources_Individuals/Heat_Illness.aspx

Submit a Story!

Do you have a story aboutClick on the link below to share your story with us, and it may appear on our website or in this enewsletter!

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/For_The_Press/medadv/Share_Story.aspx

Conferences

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

http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/events/events_List_Day.aspx#title

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