

# Montgomery County, Maryland Commission on Aging Annual Report 2015



Montgomery County, Maryland  
Department of Health and Human Services





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# Letter from the Chair of the Commission on Aging

March 2016

The Honorable Isiah Leggett  
The Honorable Nancy Floreen

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging is pleased to present its Annual Report for 2015. The Report describes the activities of the Commission as an advisor to County Government and as an advocate for the interests and concerns of older adults and their families residing in the County. The Commission on Aging takes seriously its responsibilities, including serving as the Advisory Council to the Area Agency on Aging as mandated by the Older American Act.

The Commissioners were pleased that the year ended with the County Executive's Summit on Aging in December. This was an important event, not only for the community, but also for the Commission on Aging. It was an opportunity to recognize how far we have progressed in making Montgomery County into *A Community for a Lifetime* with the *Senior Agenda* as a guidepost and framework. It was also an indication of how much more work there is to accomplish the goals of the *Senior Agenda*. A number of Commission members participated on the Summit's Advisory Group and others volunteered during the event. This has been another important year for the Commission in heightening awareness and achieving action on the concerns of the growing and diverse population of older adults residing in the County as we continued the work of making Montgomery County into *A Community for a Lifetime*.

The Commission acknowledged the challenges presented by the transition of leadership at the State level and the impact of the deficits in the FY County budget. We were encouraged that the FY16 budget contained many items that we have supported over the years, such as longer hours of operation for the recreations centers, libraries and senior centers, as well as transportation enhancements for older adults and fire prevention outreach services dedicated to seniors. We also applauded the two new proposed affordable housing projects specifically designed for older adults in Silver Spring and in Glenmont.

The Commission of Aging focused its efforts this year on making progress on the goals and visions of the *Senior Agenda* including a better understanding of the importance of data in directing an approach. The Commission's advocacy efforts on State legislation and County programs and budget recommendations related directly to the *Senior Agenda*. While budget recommendations this year focused on continuing to improve and enhance both current programs and new efforts, we remain sensitive to the economic issues affecting the County. We are also proud of the partnership we maintain with various Boards, Commissions and Government Agencies.

The Commission thanks County Executive Leggett for your strong leadership and committed actions on behalf of the County's aging population and the County Council for the interest and support that have helped maintain and expand programs that serve older adults.

We also give sincere thanks and recognition to the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, Uma S. Ahluwalia and Director of the Department of Recreation, Gabriel Albornoz, who co-chair the Subcabinet on Senior Vital Living for their leadership and responsiveness to the issues raised by the Commission.

Finally, the Commission expresses its respect and deep appreciation to two individuals who have provided exceptional support and wise guidance, Dr. John (Jay) Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services and Dr. Odile Brunetto, Director, Area Agency on Aging. Like so many outstanding professionals working for the County, their contributions, invaluable to the Commission have contributed enormously to the wellbeing of older adults in the County. The Commission also wishes to acknowledge the outstanding support provided by the following Aging and Disabilities Services staff: Tremayne Jones, Office Services Coordinator; Pazit Aviv, Village Coordinator; Shawn Brennan, Mobility and Transportation Program Manager; Emily Glazer, Senior Health and Wellness Coordinator; and Emily Rosenberg, Program Data Manager.

Sincerely,





**COMMISSION OFFICERS**

Judith Levy, Chair  
DaCosta Mason, 1st Vice Chair  
Noelle Heyman, 2nd Vice Chair  
Rudolph Oswald, Treasurer  
Isabelle Schoenfeld, Secretary

**COMMITTEE AND GROUP CHAIRS**

Aging in Place and Community: Miriam Kelty  
Commission on Aging Alumni Group: Irwin Goldbloom  
Communications and Community Outreach: Barbara Multz and Rueben Rosenfeld  
Health and Wellness: Noelle Heyman and Arva Jackson  
Public Policy: DaCosta Mason and Rudolph Oswald  
Seniors Today Task Force: Barbara Multz  
Stakeholders Forum: Spencer Schron and Grace Whipple  
Data Task Force: Sam Korper

**COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Helen Abrahams	Morton Faller	Sam Korper	Reuben Rosenfeld
Amoke Alakoye	Georgia Guenther	Judith Levy	Isabelle Schoenfeld
Noureen Chochan	Noelle Heyman	Karen Maricheau	Spencer Schron
Myrna Cooperstein	John Honig	DaCosta Mason	Sally Shea
Paul Del Ponte	Song Hutchins	Jerry Morenoff	Revathi Vikram
David Denton	Arva Jackson	Barbara Multz	Grace Whipple
Tamara Duell	Charles Kauffman	Douglas Newton	Syed Yusuf
Stephanie Edelstein	Miriam Kelty	Rudolph Oswald	

**LIAISONS TO COMMISSION ON AGING**

Aging and Disability Services: John (Jay) Kenney  
City of Gaithersburg: Matt Kelleher  
City of Rockville Commission on Aging: Monk Casper  
Commission on Health: Marcia Pruzan  
Commission on People with Disabilities: Seth Morgan  
Department of Housing and Community Affairs: Leslie Marks  
Department of Recreation: Jeffrey Bourne and Phil Smakula  
Department of Transportation: Faisal Khan  
Elder Women’s Aging Alliance: Sarah Gotbaum  
Ethnics Affairs Committee: Pat Lesnick  
Housing Opportunities Commission: Gail Gunod-Green  
Jewish Council on Aging: Harriet Shapiro  
Jewish Foundation for Group Homes: Beth Shapiro  
I Kaur Foundation: Mirin Phool  
Maryland Commission on Aging: Maria V. Jimenez  
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services: Jim Resnick  
Montgomery County Police Department: Morton Davis  
Office Of Community Partnerships: Austin Heyman

**AGING AND DISABILITIES SERVICES/DHHS LIAISONS TO COA**

Odile Brunetto, Director, Area Agency on Aging  
Pazit Aviv, Village Coordinator  
Shawn Brennan, Mobility and Transportation Program Manager  
Emily Glazer, Senior Health and Wellness Coordinator  
Jennifer Long, Aging and Disability Resource Line Manager  
Tremayne Jones, Offices Services Coordinator  
Emily Rosenberg, Program Data Manager



## Enabling Legislation

The Commission on Aging, established in 1974, was operated under the auspices of the County Council until August 1987, when its operation was transferred to the Executive Branch. Chapter 27, Article III of the Montgomery County Code created the Commission on Aging under the declared public policy of the County to:

- Improve conditions of the aging or elderly in the County;
- Work toward the elimination of restrictions that impede older citizens from full participation in the mainstream of community life; and
- Assist and stimulate all levels of government and the community to be more responsive to the needs of the County's older residents.

In addition, the Commission on Aging serves as the Advisory Council to the Area Agency on Aging as described in the federal Older Americans Act. Members of the Commission are appointed by the County Executive subject to confirmation by the County Council. Under a section specifying powers and duties of the Commission, there are several provisions outlining a broad spectrum of powers. The following two subsections provide a good example of the breadth of the Commission's power:

The Commission shall have the power...

- (a) To research, assemble, analyze and disseminate pertinent data and educational materials relating to activities and programs which will assist in meeting the needs and solving the problems of the aging; to cooperate with public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals in identifying and solving the problems of the aging; and to develop and conduct, as appropriate, in cooperation with county government, other services and programs dealing with the problems and needs of the aging.
- (g) To advise and counsel the residents of the county, the County Council, the County Executive and the various departments of county, state and federal governments on matters involving the needs of the aging, and to recommend such procedures, programs or legislation as it may deem necessary and proper to promote and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all persons, regardless of their age. ■

## Commission Membership

The Commission on Aging consists of no fewer than 18 members appointed by the County Executive, subject to confirmation by the County Council. Members must be County residents of whom a majority shall be age 60 and older. Members include: those who participate in or who are eligible to participate in programs under the Older Americans Act; local elected officials or their designees; individuals who are or who have been active in government, business, industry, labor, community service, religious, social services, education, and representatives of major organizations or agencies concerned with aging. ■

## Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is responsible for the provision of a continuum of home and community-based services and provides staff support to the Commission on Aging (COA). In conjunction with community partners, the AAA is involved in administering County and State grant awards to contractors for services, public education/outreach, networking, and referrals.

AAAs were established under the Federal Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1973 to respond to the needs of Americans ages 60 and older in every local community. The AAA strives to develop a range of options that allow older adults to choose the home and community-based services and living arrangements that suit them best. The AAA is part of a national network of over 670 AAAs established under the OAA to improve the quality of life for older persons by a network that maintains a holistic view of aging. The AAA are mandated to "foster the development and implementation of comprehensive and coordinated systems to serve older individuals..."

### Highlights of AAA Activities in Fiscal Year 2015:

- Staff from the Aging and Disability Services Line, a Maryland Access Point, answered nearly 23,290 calls to assist seniors, persons with disabilities and their families, providing access to information and needed short- and long-term care services offered both by the County and our nonprofit partners.
- The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program conducted more than 3,500 visits to long-term care facilities and investigated 416 formal complaints. The program has dedicated volunteer corps of 45 State certified individuals serving 225 facilities.
- The Public Guardianship program served 126 persons in need of protective services as determined by the courts, conducting more than 1,200 face-to-face contacts with these clients. Additionally, the program conducted eight education and training events for more than 400 participants.
- The Senior Nutrition Program served 6,384 clients and provided more than 390,000 meals, both in congregate sites and through home-delivered meals.
- The AAA via contracts with Gaithersburg UpCounty Senior Center and the Mobile Dentist, provided dental care and dentures to 146 seniors lacking insurance.
- The Nurses Team conducted 2,226 Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) evaluations, which are mandated to enable eligible persons to receive community-based, long-term Medicaid-funded services. An additional 1,485 evaluations were assigned to the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene or Schaefer Center contract nurses.
- The AAA currently provides nurse monitoring services via its contract partners to more than 1,700 Community First Choice Program clients. These clients receive services via the Community Options Waiver, Community First Choice, Increased Community Service, or Community Personal Assistance Service Programs of DHMH.
- The AAA Supports Planning Agency serve 450 Community First Choice clients.
- The Health and Wellness program served 700 individuals through health screening sessions and 2,115 individuals through health education sessions. The Health and Wellness program also organized Falls Prevention sessions through classes such as "Bone Builders" and Falls Prevention Month program, which served more than 1,000 individuals.
- The new Mobility and Transportation Manager continues to conduct extensive outreach and training towards promoting and helping to improve transportation and mobility options for seniors and people with disabilities and secured \$125,000 in federal grant funds for use over the next two years.
- The Villages Coordinator worked with 15 established Villages and 10 Villages under development and held the first Montgomery County Villages Gathering with more than 100 participants. ■



## County Executive's Summit on Aging

### County Executive's Summit on Aging

On December 3, 2015, County Executive Isiah Leggett presided over the County's Summit on Aging to celebrate substantial accomplishments and chart the future of Montgomery County as a *Community for a Lifetime*. The Summit was the second such event to take place in the County. The first was the Senior Summit held in November 2008 to identify and plan for meeting needs of the growing population of seniors in the County and ensure that Montgomery County becomes a *Community for a Lifetime* where older adults can live safe, health and vital lives. The 2015 Summit provided the opportunity to review the many policies, programs, and accomplishments resulting from the 2008 event and to focus on efforts going forward that allow seniors of all socioeconomic, ethnic, and diverse backgrounds to live and thrive in the County.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil, Board of Trustees, AARP, Professor of Social Welfare and Public Policy, Director, Center for Policy Research on Aging, Luskin School of Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles. The luncheon speaker was Jeff Kramer, Executive Directors of Strategic Alliances at Verizon. The afternoon presenter was Sandy Markwood, Executive Director of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

The 2015 Summit on Aging brought together more than 400 stakeholders from government, business, nonprofit, advocacy, faith-based, and health care organizations as well as County seniors. During the morning session attendees, heard from the County Executive and co-chairs of the Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living, Uma Ahluwalia, Director of Health and Human Services, and Gabriel Albornoz, Director of the Department of Recreation.

At the Summit, it was announced that Montgomery County became the first County in Maryland, to join the WHO/AARP Age Friendly Communities and the second to join the Bright Focus Foundation Dementia Friendly America Initiative.

Members of the Commission served on the County Executive's Summit on Aging Advisory Group to help plan and implement the Summit. Commission Chair, Judith Levy is the lead on the Summit's Strategic Planning Work Group and other Commissioners served on different Summit work groups.



**Isiah Leggett, County Executive with attendees of Summit on Aging**



**Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services**



## Commission Activities and Priorities

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging works toward making our County a place where residents can live their entire lives. By the year 2030, the senior population of Montgomery County will increase 54 percent with approximately one-in-five residents over the age of 65. Moreover, Montgomery County has the largest share of Hispanic and Asian elderly in the state and other diverse groups of older adult residents. This dramatic demographic shift has been the impetus for expanding current and establishing new priorities for senior issues.

More than 43 percent of County seniors age 65 and older, the majority of who are women, live alone. Nearly one in ten seniors has a limitation in performing activities of daily living. Depending on their income level, they need different services. For some, case management, transportation, in-home assistance, dental services, congregate and home-delivered meals are essential. In addition, respite care is often needed in situations where the senior lives with a caregiver.

The Commission has an obligation to be a responsible and effective voice for older adults in the community. In so doing, the Commission meets as a whole on a monthly basis except during the summer, when the Commissioners are engaged in Summer Studies focusing on specific topical area. The Commissioners also serve on four Commission Committees: Aging in Place and Community, Communications and Community Outreach, Health and Wellness, and Public Policy. These committees meet monthly. Both the monthly meetings of the Commission and the four Committees invite presenters to provide their expertise on specific subjects. Hence, the meetings are educational and help inform the Commission’s advocacy and priority activities. All meetings are open to the public and representatives from other Commissions, Boards, Committees, Montgomery County Department, Agencies, and other stakeholders may attend and participate in these meetings. In addition, Commissioners may serve as liaisons to other groups with similar goals as the Commission’s. Further, Commissioners meet with the County Executive, County Council Members, Department Directors and staff, State legislators, members of the public, and others to advance programs, services, and policies on behalf of senior residents of the County.



**Commissioner Isabelle Schoenfeld, COA Chair  
Judith Levy and Director of Area Agency on Aging  
Dr. Odile Brunetto**

With a vision and goals outlined in the Commission-developed *Community for a Lifetime: A Senior Agenda* the Commission focuses on different areas of the Senior Agenda each year. The Commission’s areas of focus this year included health and wellness, caregiving and caregiver, and protecting older adults from financial abuse. The following sections describe the various activities that the Commission undertook in 2015 to support its priorities.

### **Legislative Activity**

The year always begins with a focus on legislative activities in Annapolis. This year, Commission leadership attended the United Seniors of Maryland Legislative Breakfast and met with members of the Montgomery County delegation. Most important was the presentation by Rona Kramer, newly appointed Secretary of Aging. She emphasized the need to work together with the new Governor, to inform him and new members of the legislature on the needs of seniors. She mentioned the challenge of expected explosive growth of the number of seniors in the State over the next decades.

Commissioners, led by the Public Policy Committee co-chairs DaCosta Mason and Rudy Oswald, identified a number of bills being considered in the State Legislative session that would impact seniors. The General Assembly passed and the Governor signed three bills that the Commission supported through oral and/or written testimony. The bills were:



## Commission Activities and Priorities

- Creation of a Task Force on Family Caregiving and Long-Term Supports.
- Permission for the State's Attorney to petition the court in a criminal case to freeze the assets of a perpetrator of financial crimes against vulnerable and elder adults.
- Authorization for the Transportation Network Services to operate in the State. This would include regulations for operators such as Uber and Lyft going forward.

### Commission Legislative Breakfast

On November 12th, the Commission held its annual Legislative Breakfast attended by members of the Commission and members of the Montgomery County delegation to the State legislature. Fourteen State senators and delegates attended as well as two staff members representing their legislators. Commissioner Noelle Heyman's presentation focused on caregiver support and the importance of the Care Act. Commissioner Barbara Multz presented on elder financial abuse and legislation needed to allow the Attorney General's Office to bring civil action on behalf of a victim, in addition to a criminal action. Members of the delegation provided excellent feedback on actions that can be taken to enhance the Commission's advocacy on these issues.



**Commissioner Noelle Heyman  
COA Legislative Breakfast**

### County Budget

The Commission on Aging recognized and appreciated the efforts of the County Executive and the FY16 budget that responded to needs of both vulnerable, low income, and more healthy vital older adults. After several years of cutbacks to services to seniors, the budget included increases to services for seniors across several departments. The following highlights the Commission's FY16 budget recommendations:

- Maintenance of current levels of subsidies for Respite Care Services
- Maintenance of current level of funding for Medical Adult Day Care
- Continued support for a position of a part-time Caregiver Support Fellow
- Maintain a new program in the States Attorney's Office to protect vulnerable adults against crime.
- Consider small start up grants to assist the establishment of new Villages in low and moderate income and diverse communities.

The Commissioners formed small teams and meet with individual County Council members to support the County Executive's FY16 budget enhancements for seniors, to discuss items that may not be in the County Executive's budget, and to demonstrate how they relate to the priorities of the Senior Agenda.

Commission committees identified budget priorities for FY17. The Commission continued to stress that the County consider the overall needs of older adults and the cumulative effect of programs when changes are made.

On October 14th, Commissioner, Chair Judith Levy spoke on FY17 priorities to the County Council's Health and Human Services Committee, and on October 20th, Commissioner Noelle Heyman testified at the Council's Health and Human Services Committee's FY17 Budget Forum.

## Commission Activities and Priorities

The Commission selected Health/Mental Health, Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Aging in Place as top priority issues for seniors for both the immediate budget and for the near future. The Commission's work during 2015 demonstrated how critical it is to identify specific actions that will address high priority needs of seniors. We look forward to the County's budgeted annual action steps to move ahead.

### **Caregivers and Caregiving**

The Commission continues to focus on caregiver services and supports with the goal of establishing a Care-givers Coalition guided by a Caregiver Coordinator in the future. For the third year in a row, the Commission conducted a Summer Study to delve further into issues effecting caregivers. The title of the summer study was Long-Term Care and Supports: Nursing Home Quality, with the objective to learn more about the challenges faced by nursing homes and their residents. The Executive Summary of this summer study is provided in this report.

On October 28th, COA held its Second Stakeholder Forum on Family Caregiving. The 87 forum attendees represented family caregivers, service providers, representatives of advocacy groups, and disease-specific organizations. Elinor Ginzler, a nationally recognized expert in family caregiving, moderated the Forum. The forum was conducted in a moderated panel format with two separate panels. The first panel consisted of six County Council members and State legislators. The second panel consisted of six representatives of service providers, advocacy organizations and the business community. Sixteen recommendations were developed, categorized by advocacy, collaboration and legislation. Recommendations were shared with the Department of Health and Human Services Director, the County Executive, and the County Council.

### **Commission Outreach and Partnerships**

The Commission continues to form liaisons with other Boards, Commissions and Stakeholder groups. In addition, most Commission members are involved with other groups and activities supporting senior services. For example the Commission Chair Judith Levy and the Commission Liaison met with the Vital Living Network to improve collaboration between the two groups. In addition, the Commission Chair moderated a Senior Leadership Montgomery event on April 14, 2015. The panelists included Rona Kramer, Secretary of Aging; Uma Ahluwalia, Director of Montgomery County Health and Human Services and Linda McMillian, Montgomery County Council Senior Legislative Analyst.

The Commission participated at the Jewish Council for Aging Maryland 50+ Employment Expo on June 1st at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. Members of the Commission staffed a table, handed out materials, and answered questions. Guest speakers at Commission meetings included: Isaiah Leggett, County Executive; Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services and Co-Chair, Senior Subcabinet; Jeanne Anthony, Senior Project Manager for Education and Outreach, AARP; Andrew Aurand, Maryland-National Park and Planning Committee; Betsy Carrier, Nexus Montgomery; Amy Gotwals, National Association of Area Agency on Aging, Chief of Public Policy and External Affairs; Tovah Kasdin, Director, Elder Safe Center; Gail Kohn, Coordinator, DC Age Friendly Initiative; Rona Kramer, Secretary, Maryland Department of Aging and Deborah Zimmerman, Adult Guardianship Liaison, Montgomery County Circuit Court, Family Division Services.



## Commission Activities and Priorities

### 2015 White House Conference on Aging

Commission members and members of the Vital Living Network co-sponsored a White House Forums Watch Party on April 27, 2015, at the White Oak Senior Center. The purpose of the watch party was to listen to the White House Forums and to provide input and ideas for the 2015 White House Conference on Aging taking place in July 2015, from across the Country.

On July 13, 2015, Commissioner Barbara Mulitz and former Commissioner Lance Kilpatrick attended the White House Conference on Aging as invited guests. The Conference focused on the following areas:

- Ensuring retirement security
- Promoting health aging
- Providing long-term services and supports; and
- Protecting Older Americans from Financial Exploitation, Abuse and Neglect



Former Commissioner Lance Kilpatrick and Commissioner Barbara Mulitz

### Commission on Aging Bylaws Revision

During the Commission's Fall Retreat in September 2014, the Commissioners agreed that the COA Bylaws be reviewed and updated. Starting in the winter of 2015, a team comprised of members of the Commission worked on revising the bylaws. The objectives of the revision were: to update the information in the bylaws to reflect current reality, to improve COA functioning, and to delete information that was at a level of detail that more appropriately fits with a COA operational guidelines document than a bylaws document. The COA approved the revision at the November 19, 2015 Commission on Aging meeting and it was submitted to County Attorney Marc P. Hansen in December 2015, for consideration.

### Moving Forward: The Senior Agenda and World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly Communities

While the County has taken many steps to improve the quality of life for older residents, the Commission continues to believe that it is important for the County to have a comprehensive approach that sets out a direction for the future—one that will help guide and ensure progress in becoming an even better *Community for a Lifetime*.

The Commission understands the importance of establishing priorities and making sure we have a systematic approach. The *Senior Agenda*, with supportive programming and annual budgetary actions each year, demonstrates a commitment to that goal.

The Commission undertook activities that provided information about different communities across the country that are pursuing programs and policies to make their jurisdictions *Communities for a Lifetime*.

On May 28, 2015 the Commission held its Annual Meeting. Guest speakers were County Executive Isiah Leggett; Rona Kramer, Maryland Secretary of Aging; and Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Department of Recreation; Commissioner Isabelle Schoenfeld moderated a panel on the WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Communities Program. Guest panelists included Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services; Jeanne Anthony, AARP; Gail Kohn, DC Age-Friendly Cities Initiative, and Andrew Aurand, M-NCPPC.

County Executive Isiah Leggett remarks included his support for the *Senior Agenda*, concern for the needs of family caregivers, accomplishments regarding safety and security in the County, concern about sufficient affordable housing, and the addition of the new Senior Fellow position focusing on family caregiving.

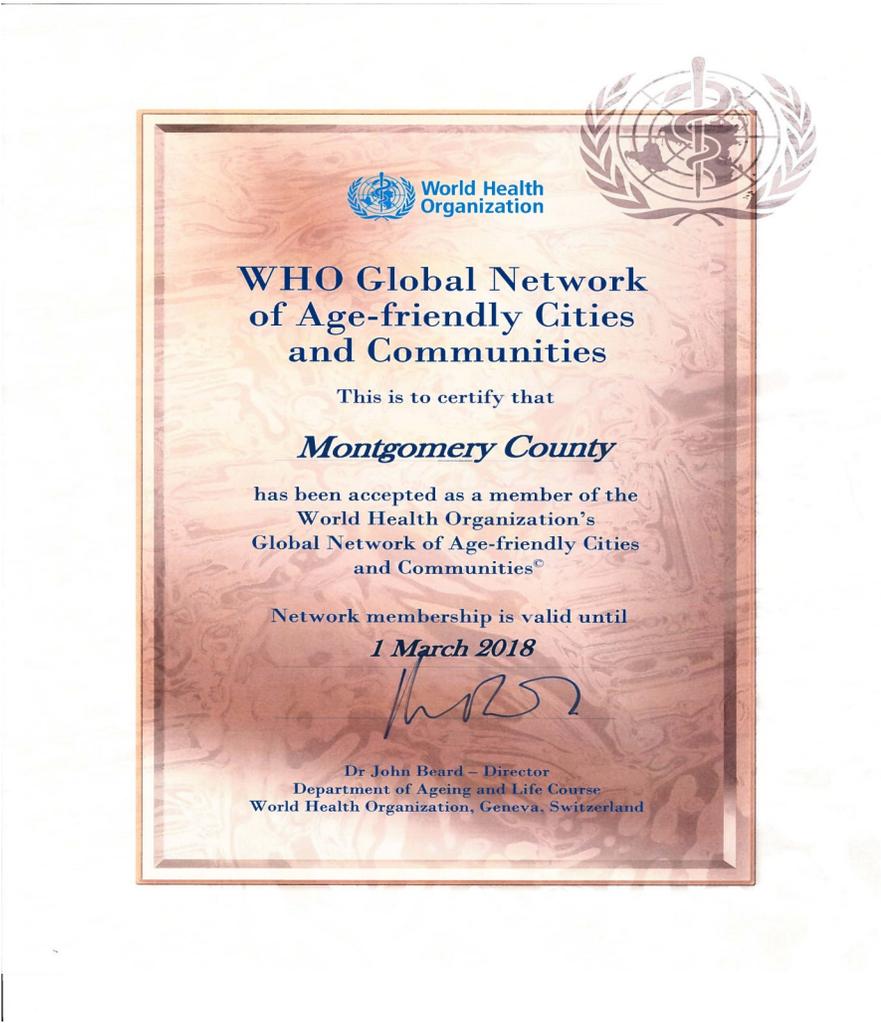


Commission Activities and Priorities

The Commission conducted a 2015 Summer Study to explore communities for a lifetime characteristics being implemented in seven jurisdictions across the Country. Some of the jurisdictions were following the WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Communities approach and others were informed by the National Area Agency on Aging approach. Based on the findings of the Summer Study, the Commission developed recommendations on implementing characteristics of a community for a lifetime, that were provided to the County Executive, County Council, and M-NCPPC Planning Board and Department.

On September 24, 2015, the Commission Chair, Judith Levy and Commissioner Charles Kauffman testified at a Montgomery County Health and Human Services Committee regarding the County Planning Department and the COA 2014 and 2015 Summer Studies recommendations.

After careful consideration with recommendations from Department of Health and Human Services, the County Executive accepted the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP invitation for Montgomery County to join with Washington, DC and other communities across the United States (and internationally) in becoming a WHO Age-Friendly Community. This was announced at the December 3, 2015, Summit on Aging. ■





## Commission on Aging Committees and Groups

**Aging in Place and Community (AIPC)**—AIPC priorities are transportation, housing and support of aging in place programs/villages and public policy. AIPC has been working to develop a framework for assessing progress on meeting its priority objectives.

AIPC identified accomplishments and defined information and service needs in transportation. AIPC met with a representative from DOT Ride-On to learn about ridership and criteria for decision making about changes in service and schedules, and about accessibility of vehicles and driver training to assist seniors and people with disabilities. Other transportation-related issues discussed this year include the challenge of effective outreach to the neediest population groups; accessibility issues especially for people with mobility impairments; bus stop and sidewalk improvement; pedestrian safety; and the possibility of shuttle and/or van service to accommodate seniors.

Relative to age-friendly communities, AIPC co-sponsored with the Public Policy Committee, a proposal for a summer study on how age-friendly and livable communities are being implemented in the U.S. The study was conducted, the executive summary is in this report and the full summer study report is available on the Commission on Aging's website. <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/COA/COAindex.html>

AIPC participated in the Montgomery County Village Gathering. AIPC Chair, Miriam Kely organized a presentation on Village models. AIPC monitored the growth of Villages in Montgomery County and met regularly with Pazit Aviv, Montgomery County Village Coordinator. Draft chapters of the Village Guide were sent to committee members for comment and will be discussed in 2016.

Accessible and affordable housing, another priority area, was the focus of committee meetings during the last quarter. AIPC invited architects, home modifications experts, builders, and policy experts as guest speakers to learn about and consider housing issues. The Committee noted that a "Design for Life" tax credit incentive is available for home modifications for livability and visitability in Montgomery County. AIPC encouraged the Permitting Services Department to work towards greater public awareness of this tax credit incentive program. AIPC and guests engaged in wide-ranging discussion on the cost of retrofitting versus introducing code changes applicable to new construction, technological changes that will change applicable to new construction, technological changes that will change today's standards and modifications, and the need for public education.

AIPC members played an active role in the December 3, 2015, Summit on Aging by participating on the planning committee and leading working groups. Priorities for the coming year continue to be implementation of the Senior Agenda, progress on becoming a *Community for a Lifetime*, and monitoring policy, progress and opportunities and challenges in its priority areas.

**Communications and Community Outreach (CCO)**—CCO discussed opportunities to reach out to older adults for the December 2015 Summit on Aging. This included ideas for stakeholder outreach to encourage participation in the Summit as well as in the Summit survey and in focus groups. The goal of these activities was to provide older adults an opportunity to share concerns and needs as they age in the community.

The CCO spearheaded Commission support for a Commission on Aging Alumni Group. The Commission on Aging Alumni group's first alumni breakfast introduced former commissioners and current commissioners, and a conversation was initiated to sort out opportunities for collaboration and support, thus allowing commission activities/projects to benefit from joint efforts between current and former commissioners. As issues and challenges surrounding older adults continues to grow, the Commission is well aware of the need to work jointly with partners and alliances.

## Commission on Aging Committees and Groups

**Seniors Today**—The cable television show, *Seniors Today* continues to present relevant and engaging programming. Programming in 2015 included a wide variety of information important to Older Adults including: Scam Protections and Reporting, Fire Safety, Conflict Resolution Center, Transportation Options, Library Innovations, Life Long Learning, Villages, Aging in Place, and Reverse Mortgages.

In June, the *Seniors Today* Program celebrated the 150th episode of the long running popular show. Congratulations to Austin Heyman, host; Michael Bruen, Director and Producer; and Commission on Aging co-producer Barbara Mulitz for this successful and important program. *Seniors Today* program airs on Comcast/RCN 6, Verizon 30 at the following times: Mon-(10:00am), Tues- (1:00am, 12:30pm, 6:00pm) Thurs- (2:30am, 6:00pm), Fri-(10:30am) Sat- 2:00am).

**Health and Wellness (H&WC)**—H&WC researches, supports and advocates for the health and wellness of Montgomery County residents and the programs that serve them and provides guidance to the Commission on Aging. H&WC Committee continued to monitor developments, progress, and needs in healthcare; care-giving and, caregiver support services; long term care and support services; hospice; public policy and legislative opportunities; and in addition, it developed possible summer study topics.

**Aging and Disabilities Programs**—In the Spring H&WC met with Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disabilities Services, to learn more about important health care programs and initiatives in Montgomery County: Montgomery County Cares (13% are 65+), the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), Health Partners, and the Leadership Institute for Equity and the Elimination of Disparities (LIEED).

**Caring and Long Term Services and Supports**—H&WC maintained focus on caregiving and caregivers by learning more about current caregiver support services. H&WC members and guests met with hospice providers to learn more about their services and how they work together to provide care to residents at the end of life. The committee also learned about the Med Star Medical House Call Program (which is currently based in the District of Columbia only) and other “wrap around services” now planned for low income seniors here in Montgomery County as well as learned about the Health Services Cost Review Commission and its goal of reducing hospital re-admissions.

The Committee also reviewed the Voice of Quality report on “State of Nursing Home Quality in Maryland and Washington, DC,” 2014. The issue became the topic of a Summer Study titled “*Long Term Care Services and Supports: Nursing Home Quality.*” As a follow-up to the Summer Study, H&WC coordinated a Geriatric Nurse Workforce Development meeting. Representatives from University of Maryland, Montgomery College (Health Sciences and General Education Programs), Holy Cross, Alzheimer’s Association, the Montgomery County Ombudsman Program, Fox Hill Assisted Living Facility, and the non-profit Home Care Partners met to discuss the challenges relative to developing and growing the long-term care and geriatric workforce and action steps to help improve the current situation. Many aspects of caregiving and long-term services and supports have been discussed by H&WC, including public policy and legislation.

**Legislation**—H&WC supported state legislation in writing or in-person testimony for the following: CARE Act, Care-giver Task Force, Paid/Safe Sick Leave. The Committee made a concerted effort to advance the CARE Act during the 2015 COA legislative breakfast in November with an excellent and informative exchange with the delegates .

**Data**—H&WC worked with Dennis Linders of the County Stats Office to create interactive maps to identify the location/ address and phone number for every nursing home, assisted living and adult day care program in Montgomery County, the number of staff and the number of residents for every facility. Each map stands alone or can be laid over the others to get a clear picture of the location of available facilities. A future goal: connect addresses to “googlemaps” for easy directions to each facility. Thank you to Dennis Linders and his team for their tremendous effort and helpful results.

**Collaboration**—H&WC liaised and participated in community education efforts with the Commission on Health, Healthy Montgomery (discharge planning to reduce hospital readmits and data tracking), Health Partners, and the Coalition for Care at the End of Life, e.g., facilitated a viewing session of Consider the Conversation videotape.



## Commission on Aging Committees and Groups

**Public Policy Committee (PPC)**– PPC examines policies, programs, and proposals of the state, local and federal governments for their effects on the lives of Montgomery County seniors. The *Senior Agenda*, developed by the Commission and approved by the County Executive and County Council in 2012, serves as a guide to PPC in making legislative and budget recommendations.

**State-Level Activities**–The Commission through PPC reviewed, monitored, and/or suggested actions on more than 25 bills. These bills focused on Commission priorities of caregiving, health and wellness, and protection of vulnerable adults. PPC advocated for two bills enacted by the General Assembly that specifically involved Commission priorities: an elder abuse bill that freezes the assets of the perpetrator of financial abuse of a vulnerable adult and will help to ensure that the perpetrator has funds available to reimburse victims of the financial abuse; the other bill creates the Task Force on Family Caregiving and Long-Term Supports. The Task Force is required to study the issue and make recommendations for legislative and administrative action to the Governor and General Assembly on or before September 30, 2016. The PPC also sent a letter to the Health and Human Services Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee requesting restoration of cuts in the Governor’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene FY16 budget regarding certain Medicaid services and non-Medicaid Adult Day Care subsidies. The General Assembly supported the Commission’s position and reinstated funds for these proposed cuts. In addition to advocating in Annapolis, PPC organized the Commission’s participation in the Senior Lobby Day at the Capitol, sponsored by the United Seniors of Maryland and the Commission on Aging Annual State Legislators Breakfast. Both activities raised the visibility of Commission priorities with State legislators.

**County-Level Activities**–The PPC led the Commission’s activities on the County’s budget process. In 2015, the County Executive announced a significant budget shortfall and that cuts would be necessary in the FY16 budget. As a result, the PPC budget priorities recommended that the County Executive maintain the budget funding levels set in the FY15 budget. PPC members testified at the County Executive’s budget forums and before the County Council to this effect. The Commission was particularly concerned about the FY16 budget maintaining the same level of funding for those programs in which increases were obtained in the FY15 budget. Thus the Commission focused on maintaining funding levels for Adult Day Care subsidies; reimbursement rates for Adult Foster Care Small Group Homes; a Senior Fellow Caregiver Support position; a position in the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program; and additional programs for the Adult Abuse program. As a result of Commission advocacy, the Senior Initiative of the County budget maintained all of the funds the Commission sought to protect. The Summer Study on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities included recommendations that the County create a high-level manager position and an Age-Friendly Livable Community Advisory Board. The Commission advocated before the County Council for the County to become such a community. This advocacy led to the County Executive, with the support of the County Council, to investigate the benefits of becoming an age friendly community.

**Federal-Level Activities**–The Commission sent letters to Maryland Senators and County representatives in Congress in support of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and on a proposed appropriations bill, in particular calling for protection of senior programs and benefits.



**Co-Chairs of Public Policy Committee  
Rudolph Oswald and DaCosta Mason**

## Commission on Aging Committees and Groups

### Data Task Force

Commissioner Sam Koper led the Data Task Force. The Task Force objective was to review available resources and determine what new data might be collected in the future to better understand how best to measure the impact of programs available to address the needs of the older population. The Data Task Force activities included:

- Developed surveys for use by the Commission to assess data interest and attitudes about future projects (such as WHO Age-Friendly Cities) and priorities. Presented the results at Commission meetings for member discussion.
- Commission Liaison to Health Montgomery (HM)—attended the quarterly meetings of the HM Steering Committee and participated in the continuing HM efforts to establish community approaches to implementing the Obesity (Eat Well-Be Active) and Behavioral Health Task Force efforts in communities throughout the County.
- Participated on the HM Measurement and Evaluation Subcommittee as it works to develop indicators and common metrics to monitor population health trends and approaches to assist the task forces in developing and reviewing activities.
- Held meetings with representatives of CountyStat to introduce the Commission’s interests in data concerning the County’s older population; promote these interests in meetings introducing CountyStat to local organizations; and developed links for the participation of CountyStat staff with Commission Summer Study projects.



**Commissioner Sam Koper and  
Commission on Aging Chair, Judith Levy**



## Commission on Aging Committees and Groups

### Commission on Aging Alumni Group

In May 2015, at the suggestion of former Commissioner Pat Lesnick and current Commissioner Charles Kauffman, the Commission on Aging invited former members of the Commission to consider forming an Alumni Group to tap into the interests, expertise and energies of this cohort of “graduates” for the benefits of seniors in Montgomery County. In June 2015, present and former members of the Commission, met to consider the role that an alumni group might play. The discussion was spirited and many former members signed on to participate in such an endeavor. Irwin Goldbloom was endorsed as Chair.

The Alumni Group’s first meeting was held in July, at which time they decided that the Alumni Group would be aligned with the COA and add ideas and an additional voice in support of the Commission’s objectives. Other goals and activities considered involving alumni participation in COA committee meetings and summer studies.

The Alumni Group was invited to the County Executive’s Summit on Aging. Several members participated in the planning of the program and in conducting the workgroup sessions. The Alumni Group meets monthly.



**Former Commissioner Pat Lesnick at the Senior Summit on Aging**



**Commissioner Charles Kauffman at the Senior Summit on Aging**



## Stakeholder Forum “Family Caregiver Support: A Dialogue”

This year’s Stakeholder Forum, “Family Caregiving Support: A Dialogue”, held on October 28, 2015, focused on approaches to implement the recommendations made at the February 28, 2014 “Family Caregivers of Older Adults” Forum and identified other approaches which may not have been previously considered.

Eighty-seven individuals attended. Similar to the 2014 Forum, the attendees represented family caregivers, service providers, representatives of advocacy groups and disease specific organizations.

Introductory remarks were made by: Judith Levy, Commission on Aging Chairperson; Uma Ahluwalia, Director of Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services; and Dorinda Adams, Senior Staff to the Maryland Care-givers Support Coordinating Council. The introductory remarks were followed by two panels. Panel One was comprised of County and State Legislators and other Government representatives: Roger Berliner, Councilmember; Bonnie Cullison, Delegate; Bernice Hutchinson, Assistant to Secretary Kramer, State Agency on Aging; Delores Kelley, Senator; George Leventhal, Council Chairperson; and Jeffrey Myers, Assistant to the Attorney General. Panel Two was comprised of representatives from Service Providers, Advocacy Organizations, and the Business Community: Lynn Friss Feinberg, AARP Senior Strategic Policy Advisor, Independent Living/Long Term Care; Elisa Kerneklian, Director of Human Resources, TW Perry; Susy Elder Murphy, Debra Ley Elder Care Associates, Owner Tom Najjar, Founder/President, Care Plus Incorporated; Lindsey Vajpey, Alzheimer’s Association Program and Services, and Susan Wranik, Chair Intergenerational Resource Group, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chambers of Commerce. The two panels were moderated by Elinor Ginzler, Senior Director, Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington.



Lynn Friss Feinberg, Elisa Kerneklian, Susy Elder Murphy, Tom Najjar, Lindsey Vajpey and Susan Wranik

The discussions resulted in 16 recommendations grouped by Advocacy, Collaboration, and Legislation and were shared with the County Executive and County Council. The recommendations were:

### Advocacy

1. COA should advocate that the County Council and the County Executive promote to the Montgomery County State Delegation to the Maryland Legislature, support for passage of the CARE Act.
2. COA should advocate to the County Council and the County Executive to support private agencies providing private caregivers to families, to have definitive standards for training caregivers so they are proficient in the care they are contracted to provide and have adequate communication skills so they can effectively communicate with the families they serve.
3. COA should advocate that the Maryland delegation to Congress become members of the Congressional Caregiving Caucus and work toward a national strategy for the national challenge of family caregiving.
4. COA should advocate to the County Council and County Executive to support the conversation of the half-time County Caregiver Coordinator position to a full-time position.
5. COA should advocate to the County Council and the County Executive to support additional funding for the County Village Coordinator and associated activities.
6. COA should advocate to the County Council and the County Executive to support a comprehensive and coordinated effort to get information on family caregiver services to isolated and diverse communities.
7. COA should advocate to the County Council and County Executive to support a coordinated effort to make available information on long-term care insurance.
8. COA should advocate to the County Council and the County Executive to support the establishment of a private–public County Caregiver Coalition to coordinate the delivery of family caregiver services in the County.



## Stakeholder Forum “Family Caregiver Support: A Dialogue”

### Collaboration

1. COA should encourage family caregiver service organizations to seek creative public-private partnerships.
2. COA, the County Council, and the County Executive should encourage local Chambers of Commerce and the business community to support and help employ family caregivers.
3. COA should collaborate with the County Council once the County Mental Health Inventory is completed to help identify gaps in mental health services.
4. COA encourages the collaboration of the County’s State Delegation with the State Hospital Association to reach a compromise on making the CARE Act effective and acceptable and passable as legislation.
5. COA encourages creative collaboration of family caregiver services with Federal agencies that have responsibilities related to family caregiving that could result in innovative pilot projects.

### Legislation

1. COA should encourage the Maryland Congressional delegation to support Maryland Senator Barbara Mikulski’s proposed legislation, the RAISE Act, to bring together Federal Agencies to provide a national strategy on family caregiving.
2. COA Public Policy Committee should study the feasibility of tax credits for the payment of long term care insurance.
3. COA Public Policy Committee should study the feasibility of offering tax credits to families who pay for the services of private caregivers.

## 2015 Summer Studies Executive Summaries

### **“Long Term Care Services and Supports: Nursing Home Quality” Executive Summary**

Nursing Home Care and services are critically important to vulnerable adults, mostly seniors, as well as their caregivers. According to the 2014 annual report by Voice for Quality Care, Maryland Nursing Homes received a quality rating of D+ for each of the last three years. The COA wanted to increase awareness of these troubling results, gain a better understanding of the concerns and challenges faced by nursing home providers and consumers, and better understand best practices and opportunities for improvement in quality of care and services.

Commissioners invited presenters from other Montgomery County Commissions and groups to share their expertise including:

- Kathy Schoonover, Montgomery County Nursing Home Surveyor
- Eileen Bennett, Montgomery County Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Kim Burton, Director of Older Adults Program, Mental Health Association of Maryland (a statewide non profit)
- Theresa Lee, Director of Center for Quality Measurement and Reporting, Maryland Health Care Commission

#### Findings:

- The nursing home industry is heavily regulated and, as a result, complex in management, staffing, and financing.
- Nursing Home Quality surveys are based on facility ability to follow regulation to meet “minimum” standards as opposed to quality of care and quality of life for residents.
- Staffing is a major challenge impacting the quality of care. The Director of Nursing sets the tone and hires nursing staff in each facility. Many need training in soft skills such as compassion, empathy, and critical thinking.
- A troubling shift in nursing home staffing from licensed registered nurses to licensed practical nurses—who are not trained in critical thinking skills and have responsibility for greater number of patients, resulting in higher staff turnover and lower quality of care for residents.
- Discharge planning for the transition from nursing home to home or assisted living appears to be a challenge for most facilities.

#### High-Level Recommendations:

- Learn more about regulations governing nursing homes in Montgomery County to better understand the complexities impacting management, staffing and financing.
- Advocate for the creation of a Nursing Home or Long Term Care Coalition to support and continue the work of Maryland’s new Long Term Care Culture Change Coalition.
- Advocate for expansion of the Medicaid waiver and determine which of several nursing home and long term care models provide the best patient care and quality of life. Also, advocate for the inclusion of Greenhouse and other potential alternative nursing home models into state nursing home quality survey tools.
- Advocate for increased nursing home staff education, training and support: critical thinking, people skills, and communication—especially discharge planning. Also, advocate for passage of the CARE Act.



## 2015 Summer Studies Executive Summaries

### “Commonalities and Differences in Localities’ Approaches for Aging in Community” Executive Summary

The Commission on Aging (COA) sponsored a 2015 Summer Study on “Commonalities and Differences in Localities’ Approaches for Aging in Community.” The objective of the study was to learn what other communities were successfully doing to create age-friendly environments and identifying where communities encountered challenges. It was also the intent of the summer study to identify opportunities for Montgomery County (MC) to improve current efforts to make the county a more age-friendly livable community. This report describes the study’s background, findings, and recommendations

The study consisted of three sessions held on June 23, June 30 and July 7, 2015. The invited presenters represented seven communities across the country including MC. Some of these localities were part of the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Age-Friendly Cities/Communities certification program. Others were part of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) Livable Communities Collaborative. In addition, there was a presentation on Livability Index. All out of state presenters participated via teleconference.

The presentations were guided by questions that presenters received ahead of time. The key findings were that although there were differences in how the communities organized and implemented their age friendly initiatives, there were significant commonalities. All the communities that were part of this summer study had a full time paid Executive Director, Coordinator, Manager, or another high-level position devoted to developing and implementing an Age Friendly/Livable Communities (AF/LC) Program. They also have an Advisory Board or Task Group comprised of representatives from different sectors of the community such as government, business, developers, academia, foundations, nonprofit, health care providers and other stakeholders. And, they typically develop a strategic plan or action plan (often informed by the results of a needs assessment survey) as a framework and for evaluation and accountability.

Based on the Summer Study findings and other considerations, the following recommendations were developed:

1. *Create a new high-level manager position, or, repurpose a high-level manager position that would be located in the Office of the County Executive and be solely devoted to the AF/LC program supporting and sustaining current age-friendly activities and programs and developing new ones.*

The Manager would coordinate with COA, the Senior Subcabinet, the MCNPPC, other key groups, attending meetings and providing input and updates. This position would also coordinate with the County Executive and Executive Departments, County Council, public, as well as other stakeholders.

2. *Alternatively, on an interim basis, until a high-level manager position can be created, the COA recommends a Senior Fellow position in the County Executive’s office to fulfill some of the Manager’s roles and responsibilities.*

Due to Montgomery County’s current budget shortfall, COA recognizes that creating a new high-level manager position or repurposing an existing high-level manager for AF/LC may not be doable at this time. A Senior Fellow would take the initial steps to develop and implement AF/LC initiatives.

3. *Create an AF/LC Advisory Board.*

This Board would be led by the AF/LC Manager (or, in the interim, the Senior Fellow) comprised of representatives from various sectors of the County, including government, COA business community, developers, universities, health care providers, non-profits, associations, foundations, media, the public and other stakeholders in the County.



## 2015 Summer Studies Executive Summaries

4. *Enhance the collaboration among the Senior Subcabinet departments to develop and/or implement AF/LC initiatives that cross departments and with the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC)*

The creation of the Senior Subcabinet was an important initial step in the coordination of AF/LC initiatives among county government departments. Another important step resulting from COA's 2014 Summer Study on "The Need to Improve Advocacy for Older Adults in Montgomery County Planning" was that a representative of the MNCPPC-Montgomery County Planning Department now has a seat on the Senior Subcabinet. The Senior Subcabinet members and workgroups should identify opportunities for greater collaboration.

5. *COA should coordinate closely with the AF/LC Manager (or, in the interim, the Senior Fellow) and have a seat on an AF/LC Advisory Board.*

While the Manager and the Advisory Board would spearhead major activities of an AF/LC, the COA would continue to have an important role in: monitoring, advising, and advocating for AF/LC initiatives with elected officials at the Federal, State, and County levels, government departments, other relevant stakeholder groups. COA would also continue to educate and seek input and feedback from the public about AF/LC initiatives.

6. *COA should continue to advocate for inclusion of a "Senior" section in all Master Plans and Sector Plans.*

This was a recommendation in COA's 2014 Summer Study Report on "The Need to Improve Advocacy for Older Adults in Montgomery County Planning," which COA endorsed.

The Planning Department develops master plans, reviews applications for development and analyzes various information to assist public officials plan for Montgomery County's future. The Planning Board is responsible for approval of all master plans that affect neighborhoods and how we live. As a result of the Planning Board's role in community planning their actions have a significant impact on creation of age friendly/livable communities.

To read the full reports on the above Summer Studies, visit the Commission on Aging's website at: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/COA/COAindex.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/COA/COAindex.html) ■

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Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive

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