



Commission on Aging Annual Report 2012



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Photographs are provided courtesy of
Odile Brunetto, John Honig, and Judith Welles.

Letter from the Chair of the Commission on Aging



COMMISSION ON AGING

March 2013

The Honorable Isaiah Leggett
The Honorable Nancy Navarro



Judith Welles, Chair of the
Commission on Aging

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging is pleased to present its Annual Report for 2012. 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 residing in the County.

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. A major accomplishment, with the encouragement and support of the County Executive and the County Council, has been the County's adoption of the Commission's proposal for a *Community of a Lifetime: A Senior Agenda*.

The Commission strives to support both safety net services for the frail elderly and programs to meet the interests and needs of vital older adults who want to age in their communities. Our goals are to:

- Advocate for the safety net for seniors regardless of budgetary pressures;
- Advise and monitor County government programs to increase responsiveness to the needs of seniors;
- Focus attention on the vitality and capacity of seniors to participate fully in community life;
- Advocate for transportation, affordable housing, and the range of services for seniors who choose to remain independent in their community and/or their own homes ("Aging in Place").

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 Americans Act.

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

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

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 and Executive Secretary of the Commission, both of the DHHS. Like so many outstanding professionals working for the County, their contributions, invaluable to the Commission, have contributed enormously to the well-being of older adults in the County.

Sincerely,



Judith Welles, Chair

COMMISSION OFFICERS

Chair: Judith Welles
First Vice Chair: Tamara Duell
Second Vice Chair: Paul Del Ponte
Secretary: Judith Levy
Treasurer: Grace Whipple

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Aging in Place and Community: Elaine Kotell Binder, Grace Whipple
Communications and Community Outreach: Elizabeth Brooks-Evans, Barbara Mulitz
Health and Wellness: Myrna Cooperstein, Beth Shapiro
Public Policy: Rudolph Oswald, John C. Sprague

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES STAFF

Odile Brunetto, Aging and Disability Services
Shawn Brennan, Aging and Disability Services
Tremayne Jones, Aging and Disability Services

LIAISONS

Aging and Disability Services: John (Jay) Kenney
Department of Public Libraries: Mildred Nance
Department of Recreation: Jeff Bourne, Phil Smakula
Department of Transportation: Joy Barrow
Office of Community Partnerships: Austin Heyman
Office of Fire and Rescue: Matthew Kelleher
Commission on Health: Steve Thronson
Commission on People with Disabilities: Seth Morgan
Housing Opportunities Commission: Pazit Aviv, Gail Gunod-Green
Maryland Commission on Aging: Maria V. Jimenez
Vital Living Network: Mike Greenhut, Leslie Marks
City of Rockville Commission on Aging: Morris (Monk) Casper
Committee of Ethnic Affairs: Patricia Lesnick

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Elaine Kotell Binder	Jerry Morenoff
Frederic Burke	Barbara Mulitz
Elizabeth Brooks-Evans	Mona Negm
Myrna Cooperstein	Rudolph Oswald
Morton A. Davis	Joseph Petrizzo
Paul Del Ponte	Reuben Rosenfeld
Tamara Duell	Spencer Schron
Will Hellams	Beth Shapiro
John G. Honig	John C. Sprague
Charles Kauffman	Selma Sweetbaum
Miriam Kelty	Revathi Vikram
Lance Kilpatrick	Judith Welles
Judith Levy	Grace Whipple
Leslie Y. Marks	

ENABLING LEGISLATION

The Commission on Aging, established in 1974, 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, the professions; and representatives of major organizations or agencies concerned with aging. ■

Sign in for Senior news at Montgomery County's
electronic newsletter subscription system at
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/eSubscription



AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA), headed by Dr. Odile Brunetto, is responsible for the provision of a continuum of home and community-based services and provides staff support to the Commission on Aging. In conjunction with community partners, the AAA is actively involved in administering County and state grant awards to contractors for 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 creating a network that maintains a holistic view of aging. The AAAs are mandated to "foster the development and implementation of comprehensive and coordinated systems to serve older individuals..."

Highlights of AAA Activities in Fiscal Year 2012:

- Staff from the Aging and Disability Services Line, (ADRU) a Maryland Access Point, answered nearly 22,000 calls to assist seniors, persons with disabilities and their families, and provide access to information and needed short- and long-term care services offered both by the County and our nonprofit partners. In addition, a part-time employee from "Independence Now," our local center for Independent Living, works two days each week with ADRU personnel.
- The AAA's Long-Term Care Ombudsman program conducted more than 3,100 visits to long term care facilities (LTC) and investigated 287 formal



Odile Brunetto with Elaine Binder and Chair Judith Welles

complaints. A cadre of 59 trained LTC ombudsman volunteers teamed up with our five staff members in 34 nursing homes and 190 assisted living facilities (ALF). Three additional, large ALF's are scheduled to open in January/February 2013, bringing an additional 168 beds to the County.

- The Public Guardianship program served 102 persons in need of protective services as determined by the courts, a 16% increase over last year.
- The Nurses Team conducted 1,687 Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) evaluations, which are mandated to enable eligible persons to receive community-based long term care Medicaid-funded services. The waitlist to obtain this evaluation ranges from 40 to 80 persons.
- The Health and Wellness program successfully recruited additional volunteers to lead Bone Builders Exercise classes on bone health and falls prevention, thus increasing the number of free classes offered in the County from 11 to 15, and engaging more than 200 seniors weekly.
- Through the Montgomery County Coalition on Care at End-of Life, 253 seniors in 12 community groups participated in presentations and discussions of *Consider the Conversation*.
- The Senior Nutrition program served 5,629 clients and provided more than 380,000 meals, both in congregate sites and through home-delivered meals.
- The Older Adult Waiver Program served 560 Medicaid-eligible seniors. More than 1,700 eligible Montgomery County residents in need of this program are on the state registry.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

- The Senior Care program provided financial assistance and case management services to 293 persons. The current waiting list for this state funded service is 105.
- In partnership with the Beacon and the Gazette newspapers, several outreach efforts were conducted to inform older adults and their families about helpful services in the County.

In 2012, the AAA also:

- Supported the Maryland Department of Aging's (MDoA) Innovations in Aging event by recruiting, and providing transportation and supervision of 245 participants.
- Supported and funded Holy Cross Hospital's effort to deliver the Chronic Disease Self Management Program at a church, senior residence and homeless shelter.
- Worked with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging to pilot the Diabetes Care Center.
- Worked with partners to apply for and receive \$40,000 in MDoA funding to support senior center sponsored health promotion programs. Seniors now have more access to more exercise opportunities, with less waiting, at the Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, an intergenerational, international garden at Long Branch Senior Center (MDoA funds were leveraged by a bank and local non-profit resulting in additional features), and primary dental care (benefiting 55 seniors) and a successful Falls Prevention Campaign was conducted in September 2012, engaging numerous partners in our County.

Finally, the AAA participated in the activities of the County Senior Subcabinet and the work of the established, supporting workgroups. ■

Montgomery County Neighborhood Senior Programs

<p>Bauer Drive Seniors 240-777-6922 Monday and Wednesday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Bauer Drive Community Center 14625 Bauer Drive, Rockville</p>
<p>Bethesda/Chevy Chase Seniors 240-777-6855 Monday and Wednesday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Jane E Lawton Community Center 4301 Willow Lane, Chevy Chase</p>
<p>Clara Barton Seniors 301-229-0010 Monday and Wednesday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Clare Barton Community Center 7425 McArthur Blvd., Cabin John</p>
<p>Coffield Seniors 240-777-4900 Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center 2450 Lyttonsville Road, Silver Spring</p>
<p>East County Seniors 240-777-8093 Tuesday & Friday. 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. East County Community Center 3310 Gateshead Manor Way, Silver Spring</p>
<p>Germantown Seniors 240-777-8098 Monday & Thursday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Germantown Community Center 18905 Kingsview Road, Germantown</p>
<p>Longwood/Olney Seniors 240-777-6920 Monday and Wednesday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Longwood Community Center 19300 Georgia Avenue, Brookeville</p>
<p>Mid-County Seniors 240-777-6820 Tuesday & Thursday 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Mid-County Community Center 2004 Queensguard Road, Silver Spring</p>
<p>Potomac Seniors 240-777-6960 Tues. 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. and Fri. 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Potomac Community Center 11315 Falls Road, Potomac</p>
<p>Praisner Seniors 240-777-4970 Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Marilyn Praisner Community Center 14906 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville</p>
<p>Ross Boddy/ Sandy Spring Seniors 240-777-8050 Wednesday & Thursday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Ross Boddy Community Center 18529 Brooke Road, Silver Spring</p>

Commission Activities and Priorities

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging (COA) is working toward making our County a place where residents can live their entire lives. By the year 2020, the senior population of Montgomery County will increase by 74 percent, with approximately one-in-four residents over the age of 60. 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 requires a new priority for senior issues.

More than 25 percent of County seniors age 65 and older, the majority of whom are women, live alone. An estimated 18 percent of seniors have 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 takes seriously its obligation to be a responsible and effective voice for older adults in the community. With a vision and goals outlined for a “Community for a Lifetime: A Senior Agenda,” the Commission worked to bring focus to at least seven areas of critical importance to this population: transportation, housing, socialization and leisure, health and wellness, employment, and security and safety. (See the Senior Agenda beginning on page 10.)

The Commission on Aging’s initiatives this year showed once again that it is an effective voice in advising County government and in advocating at the local, state, and federal levels for policies and programs on issues that impact the County’s older adults.

Legislative Activity. The Commission’s advocacy with the Maryland Legislature focused on safety, health, and housing. In January and February 2012, the Commission advocated for the successful passage of a new state law sponsored by Montgomery County Delegate Ben Kramer to protect seniors from financial abuse. Commissioner Rudolph Oswald, co-chair of COA’s Public Policy Committee, testified for the Commission before the State legislature in hearings on the bill, and Public Policy co-chair and Commissioner Jack Sprague met with individual legislators to advocate for the bill. The new state law requires banks and other financial institutions to report suspected financial abuse of seniors to authorities. The Commission also supported successful legislation to extend the senior prescription drug assistance program and to establish a taskforce to study the renovation and repair needs of senior homeowners.

On November 28, the Commission held its annual Legislative Breakfast, at which 18 state senators and delegates attended. The legislators showed keen interest in the Commission’s Senior Agenda for the County, a model for the state. This meet-



Commission Members at Work

Commission Activities and Priorities

ing with legislators raised a number of issues that the Commission will examine in setting its legislative agenda for 2013.

County Budget. The Commission on Aging recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the County Executive in the budget for the current year, FY 13, in responding to the needs of both the vulnerable, low-income and the more healthy, vital older adults. After several years of cutbacks to services to seniors, the current budget includes increases to services for seniors across several departments. Mr. Leggett called the enhancements a “down payment,” conveying the importance of continuing to build and fund programs to meet needs.

Eighteen Commissioners met in the spring with each County Council member to support the County Executive’s FY13 budget enhancements for seniors and to demonstrate how they relate to the priorities of the Senior Agenda.

Early in the fall, Commission committees worked to identify budget priorities for FY14, and the Commission gave early testimony. The Commission continued to urge that the County consider the overall needs of older adults and the cumulative effect of changes to programs. On October 1, Commission Chair Judith Welles spoke on budget priorities to the Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee of the County Council, and on October 15, Commissioner John Honig testified at the HHS Community FY Budget Forum. The Commission also submitted budget recommendations to County Executive Isiah Leggett.

The Commission selected transportation, housing, and mental health as top priority issues for seniors for both the immediate budget and for the near future. The Commission’s work during 2012 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 the agenda ahead.

Commission Outreach. Transportation and mobility—being able to go where they want to go, when they want to go and how they want to go—remained the single greatest challenge older adults face in their ability to remain independent. The inability to have adequate, easily accessible transportation results in fewer opportunities for socialization, physical activity and mental stimulation, all of which are essential to seniors’ ability to maintain a healthy, vital life style. The COA continued efforts to develop a comprehensive senior transportation plan based on the vision and broad goals of the Senior Agenda and were joined in this effort by a representative from the Department of Transportation, a liaison from the Commission of People with Disabilities, and private nonprofit transportation providers. Committee work included researching escorted transportation programs considered successful in other communities.

The senior population is growing more diverse. Fifty-eight percent of all Asian seniors and almost 57 percent of all Hispanic seniors in Maryland live in Montgomery County. The Commission placed priority on identifying and advising on the needs of the County’s diverse aging population, and all COA committees included diversity issues as part of their agendas.

To encourage dialogue and learn more about the needs of the County’s diverse population, the Commission researched current County data and outreach, met with relevant County staff and held discussions with national experts. The Commission hosted a Stakeholders Forum on diversity in early 2012 and identified

Commission Activities and Priorities

a panel of local diversity experts to speak at its October meeting. The Commission recommended and requested refined data on senior diversity demographics from County government. The County Executive's Subcabinet on Senior Vital Living subsequently called for existing demographic data from all departments. As a result, several County departments are developing plans to gather more demographic information, and CountyStat staff has taken responsibility for refining data on senior adult demographics. The Commission is now monitoring the development of more refined senior demographic data.

To meet the needs of a diverse group of older adults, language and cultural sensitivity, access to services, and appropriate outreach are essential. The Commission on Aging will continue to advise the County on assuring that programs and policies are inclusive of all residents and on communicating services and resources with sensitivity to language and culture.

The Commission joins other HHS-related Commissions and Boards in advocating for our local government to increase effective and regular communication and outreach to diverse communities in the County.

Commissioners met with the directors of the Department of Housing and Community Development and Park and Planning to discuss policy changes that meet the needs of older adults, particularly low income, based on positions taken by the COA. These include easing restrictions on accessory apartments, promoting residential designs that contribute to visitability and livability, and encouraging purpose-built, affordable senior housing in new developments — recommendations from the COA's Housing Taskforce. The Commission submitted testimony to the Department of Housing and Community Development on County Housing policy revisions.

The Commission continued to form liaisons with other Boards, Commissions, and stakeholder groups. Commission Chair and Second Vice Chair Paul Del Ponte met with leaders of Action in Montgomery (AIM) as that group developed its priority on senior housing. Representatives from the Commissions on Health and People with Disabilities regularly attended COA meetings. The Vital Living Network and the Rockville Commission on Aging also participated on a regular basis.

Six COA members, including the Chair, joined colleagues from across Maryland for a statewide meeting of County commissions on May 2, 2012. The Commission's Chair also testified at a public hearing of the Maryland Department on Aging in May. In addition, COA members serve on eleven County workgroups.

This year's COA summer studies highlighted housing, transportation, and employment with emphasis on the contribution of older adults to the economy. Several County Council members, County Department heads, and other County officials participated in the summer studies with Commissioners and representatives of stakeholder groups.

Two Commissioners, former Chair Elaine Binder and Leslie Marks, became Senior Fellows near the end of the year. Elaine took the next step on the Commission's focus on transportation as she began serving as a Senior Fellow on transportation to the County Council, and Leslie began serving as a Senior Fellow in the Department of Housing with emphasis on assisted living housing.

Among speakers at Commission meetings were:

- Roger Berliner, Council President
- Sandy Markwood, Executive Director, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
- Carolyn Biggins, Transit Chief, Department of Transportation

Commission Activities and Priorities

- Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Department of Recreation
- Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, a special panel of speakers representing the County's diversity included: Asian Community:

- Vivien Hsueh, CASSA (Chinese American Senior Services);
- South Asian Community: Deepa Iyer, Executive Director, SAALT (South Asian Americans Leading Together);
- African and Caribbean Communities: Daniel Koroma, Office of Community Partnerships;
- Hispanic Community: Agnes Saenz, Executive Director, Community Ministries of Rockville;
- African American Community: Arva Jackson, Chair, African American Health Program Advisory Committee.
- Hispanic Community: Agnes Saenz, Executive Director, Community Ministries of Rockville; and

Setting the Senior Agenda. We commend the County Council for its leadership on many issues of concern to older residents. At the beginning of 2012, the start of his tenure as Council President, Roger Berliner called for a Senior Forum and convened a panel of experts on the future of aging issues. When the County Executive embraced the Commission's proposal for a Senior Agenda, Councilman George Leventhal, who chairs the Council's HHS Committee, joined him in giving remarks at the announcement. While the County has taken many steps to improve services for older residents, we continue to believe that it is important for the County to have a comprehensive agenda that sets out a direction for the future one that will help guide and ensure progress to address senior needs. The Senior Agenda, with supportive program and budgetary actions each

year, will demonstrate a commitment to that goal.

On November 1, the Commission on Aging Chair, second Vice Chair Paul Del Ponte and Public Policy Co-Chair Rudy Oswald testified in support of a resolution on the Senior Agenda to the Council's Health and Human Services Committee.

The Commission on Aging is pleased by the County Executive and County Council's receptivity to adopting our proposal and by the Council's unanimous vote on a Resolution in support of the Senior Agenda on December 4. And we are especially pleased by the view of both the County Executive and the County Council that it will be actions that really count.

Just as we plan for and build roads, highways, and the basic infrastructure of communities, we need to plan for and build the infrastructure to make Montgomery County a community for a lifetime.



Gabriel Albornoz, Judith Welles, Roger Berliner, and Uma Ahluwalia

A Community for a Lifetime: A SENIOR AGENDA

Montgomery County's demographic shift to older adults is dramatic and diverse. When we look back at what our County did at the start of the Baby Boom generation, it should provide inspiration as to how Montgomery County can again rise to this demographic challenge.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, our County built the infrastructure to meet the needs of educating, transporting, and caring for the health of a new generation, Baby Boomers. We built housing, schools, parks, and put new buses and new routes into service—every aspect of a livable community. Just as we planned for and built an infrastructure for the beginning of the Baby Boom generation, we again need to plan and build to meet the new and different needs of our vibrant older population. “A Community for a Lifetime: A Senior Agenda” is that blueprint.

The Commission on Aging, in its advisory role to County government, saw the need for a long-term plan for successful aging in our County. The Commission developed and recommended a comprehensive Senior Agenda to set forth a vision and goals for a community for a lifetime.

The process toward a Senior Agenda began years ago. The County recognized that we needed to prepare for the burgeoning senior population and funded studies, the Towson Report and the Reingold Report in 2007.



County Executive Isiah Leggett, COA Chair Judith Welles, and Councilmember George Leventhal

County Executive Isiah Leggett convened a Senior Summit in 2008. The Commission on Aging conducted Summer Studies, beginning with a report on Aging in Place and, in subsequent years, studies on transportation, mental health, housing, and state legislation for a Community for a Lifetime.

In 2010, following a Commission retreat, we issued a Call to Action, requesting a comprehensive vision and agenda for seniors that considers the geographic, economic, and cultural diversity of successful aging. We also called for development of a comprehensive Senior Transportation and Mobility Plan and a seat on the Senior Subcabinet. The County Executive responded positively.

In 2011, as a result of the Commission's advocacy efforts, the Maryland Legislature passed and the Governor signed legislation that encourages counties to develop Communities for a Lifetime. At its annual meeting in May of that year, the Commission held a brainstorming session on the elements that would enable Montgomery County to become a Community for a Lifetime. The Commission appointed a special Task Force to begin drafting formal language for a Senior Agenda with input from all of our committees and study leaders. In September, a draft Senior Agenda was presented to the Commission and the final version was approved by the Commission in October, 2011.

A Community for a Lifetime: A SENIOR AGENDA

County Executive Leggett announced the Senior Agenda in May, 2012. Commission Chair Judith Welles joined with County Executive Leggett and Councilman George Leventhal in the announcement of the Senior Agenda, "A Community for a Lifetime."

The overarching vision of the Senior Agenda is that Montgomery County be a community for a lifetime, a place where older adults can live safe, healthy and vital lives. The Agenda addresses the concerns of all who want to age in place in their homes or in their community in Montgomery County. Within the Agenda are seven areas, each of which contains a vision statement, embracing the needs of older adults for:

- Transportation when needed;
- Affordable housing and choices of dwellings;
- Public health programs that promote physical and mental health;
- Recreational opportunities for physical and mental fitness and social interaction for vital health;
- Understandable and accessible information on County programs;
- Promoting the value of older workers; and
- Safety with both physical and financial protections.

The Commission applauds the County Executive for endorsing the Senior Agenda and demonstrating commitment to the needs of our senior population. As residents of the County and as an advisory body, we are proud that he endorsed a Senior Agenda, called for actions to carry out the vision, and sent a Resolution to the County Council to adopt.

On December 4, 2012, the County Council unanimously approved a Resolution on the Senior Agenda, providing a blueprint to guide County planning for the growing population of older adults and to encourage County departments to take appropriate budgetary actions each year. The Commission will continue to work with the County Government and the County Council in advising on actions planned for programs and services. We will be watching, because the needs of our older population, which differ from others and are not always evident, are often overlooked.

In recommending Council action on the Senior Agenda Resolution, the Commission also identified budget priorities in support of the Agenda. These include critical housing, transportation, and mental health priorities for older adults who are needy and at-risk and, also, for those of low and middle incomes whose continued independence relies on some services. The Commission's Chair presented these priorities to the County Executive, and they were under consideration as this annual report was prepared.

Aging in Place: Housing and Services. We recommend that the County restore funding to the Housing Initiative Fund and, thereby, enable more affordable housing for seniors. We also know that residents want to age in place, and this has led to the concept of "Villages," where neighbors help one another. If we develop communities where people can age with supportive services to meet their needs, we can reduce the costs of institutionalization and health care. We recommend the County establish a Coordinator to provide technical and planning assistance, especially for the development of Villages for lower income residents.

Transportation: Transportation is the uppermost concern of older residents, especially those aging in place. The Commission urges a transportation plan for seniors that coordinates all public and private options, including escorted transportation and a ride share service.

To build the infrastructure for aging, the budget should connect transportation to community centers for activities for mental and physical health. This needs to be an integral part of a transportation plan.

Health: Services that promote social connection and fitness are key to mental health. Recreation and senior centers provide these services, but to do so requires sufficient funding for senior center maintenance and staffing.

With increasing numbers of cases of the most frail and vulnerable, we need to adequately provide and increase funding for case management. County mental health services for vulnerable and needy seniors include Senior Outreach Services that has received flat funding for years despite unprecedented growth of our older population and respite care for caregivers, which has received harsh funding cuts.

Finally, in our outreach activities, the need for information is the most frequent comment we hear from older residents. We need to restore funds to print publications in multiple languages, because those over the age of 75 rely on and needed printed information.

Senior Nutrition Hotline
240-777-1100

Speak directly to a registered dietitian for reliable nutrition and diet information
Wednesday morning 9-11 am

Serving Montgomery County, Maryland



Visit the Senior Services Site at
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/senior



Montgomery Senior Site
 Caregivers
 Consumer Issues
 Employment
 Health
 Recreation & Libraries
 Safety
 Senior Housing
 Taxes & Finance
 Transportation

SENIOR AGENDA

Resolution No.	17-623
Introduced:	November 27, 2012
Adopted:	December 4, 2012

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of the Commission on Aging's Senior Agenda

Background

1. The Commission on Aging was established in 1974 to improve conditions of older adults in the County; work toward the elimination of restrictions that impede older citizens from full participation in the mainstream of community life, and to assist and stimulate all levels of government and the community to be more responsive to the needs of the County's older residents.
2. In 2010, the Census estimated that 119,770 seniors (aged 65 and above) live in Montgomery County. This was 12.3% of the population. The number of seniors is projected to increase to 174,290 by the year 2020, 45% increase. By the year 2040 over 21% of the population is projected to be 65 years old or older.
3. Recognizing the projected growth in the senior policy population, in 2007 the County began a strategic planning process that included a report from Towson University's Center for Productive Aging, titled "Imagining an Aging Future for Montgomery County" and a separate study on senior outreach and communication. In 2008, The County Executive convened a Senior Summit that identified eight policy areas affecting older adults: (1) Communication and Outreach, (2) Housing and Zoning, (3) Transportation and Mobility, (4) Health and Wellness, (5) Civic and Social Engagement, (6) Home and Community Support Services, (7) Safety, and (8) Employment. The County Executive also established his Senior Subcabinet on Vital Aging to support his Senior Initiative.
4. In 2010, the Commission on Aging issued a "Call to Action" asking the County to adopt a Senior Agenda to plan over the next five years for the projected increase in adults over the age of 65. In October 2011, the Commission on Aging approved its Senior Agenda. The Agenda's vision is that "Montgomery County will be a Community for a Lifetime — a place for older adults to live safe, healthy and vital lives." The Agenda calls for a commitment to older adults in its policies and planning and provides a vision statement with action steps for Transportation, Housing, Socialization and Leisure, Health and Wellness, Communications, Employment, and Security and Safety.

SENIOR AGENDA

5. In May 2012, the County Executive sent a request to the County Council to approve a resolution in support of the Senior Agenda. In his memo, the County Executive says that he fully endorses the vision articulated in the Commission's Senior Agenda and the key elements identified as optimal to aging in place/community. He notes that the Senior Agenda aligns closely with the areas identified in his Senior Summit and the focus of his Senior Subcabinet on Vital Aging.
6. On November 1, 2012, the Council's Health and Human Services Committee met with the Commission on Aging to discuss its Senior Agenda and priorities for Fiscal Year 2014. The Commission told the HHS Committee that Council approval of the Senior Agenda would establish a policy around older adults that can be used as a guidepost for now and the future and would encourage County departments to take action each year. The Commission also shared that there are critical housing, transportation, and mental health priorities for older adults who are needy and at-risk and, also, for those of low and middle-incomes whose continued independence relies on some services. The Commission's FY 2014 priorities include funding for the Housing Initiative Fund to enable more affordable housing for seniors, a coordinator for "villages" (particularly for lower income residents), budget enhancements to connect transportation to community centers for activities for mental and physical health, funding for senior center maintenance and staffing increased case management, senior outreach services, and respite care. The Commission also urged that funds be approved to allow more information to be printed, as many older residents rely on printed information.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The County Council endorses the Commission Aging's Senior Agenda (attached) as a blueprint for planning for the growth of the senior population and making "Montgomery County a Community for a Lifetime."

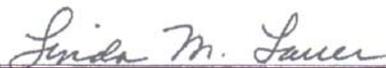
Requests that, as a part of developing his FY 2014 Recommended Operating Budget, the County Executive consult with the Commission on Aging on its FY 2014 priorities that were presented to the Health and Human Services Committee.

Requests that the County Executive consider the Senior Agenda's vision and action steps for transportation, housing, socialization and leisure, health and wellness, communications, employment, and safety and security as a part of his planning and budgeting process, and that in developing his Recommended 2015-2020 Capital Improvement Program address accessibility of recreation programs for seniors, using libraries as a location of activities and resources for older adults, and connecting transportation to senior programs.

Request the Executive provide outcome measures for his Senior Initiative to facilitate evaluation of specific items funded in the capital and operating budgets and progress being made in achieving the vision of the Senior Agenda.

Affirms its commitment to make funding senior programs that support the vision in the Senior Agenda a priority within the resources available for FY 2014.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the County

SENIOR AGENDA

COMMITMENT TO OLDER ADULTS

- The County will have a policy against ageism including age stereotyping.
- Older adults are a valuable economic, cultural and social resource and will be included in all County planning activities at the Executive and Council levels.
- Planning related to older adults will include consideration of diversity, inclusiveness and inter-generational elements.
- Demographic data about older adults will be maintained, analyzed and incorporated into planning.
- Resource information relevant to older adults will be distributed and accessible.
- The County will have a plan to address options for aging in place and alternatives.
- The County will promote public-private partnerships that contribute to implementation of this Agenda.

**SENIOR AGENDA
MONTGOMERY
COUNTY WILL BE A
COMMUNITY FOR A
LIFETIME—A PLACE FOR
OLDER ADULTS TO LIVE
SAFE, HEALTHY
AND VITAL LIVES.**

TRANSPORTATION

Vision: Montgomery County will have public and private transportation and mobility systems that enable older adults to go where they want to go, when they want to go and how they want to get there.

- Transportation planning will include a focus on the needs of older adults as they become less able to drive.
- Affordable senior transportation will be a priority.
- Planning will include in-neighborhood options to make transportation accessible and to make affordable escorted transportation available.
- Planning will encompass both the needs and safety of pedestrians and those who do not drive.
- Transportation planning will include a focus on the needs of older adults as they become less able to drive.

HOUSING

Vision: *Montgomery County will promote choices of dwelling types so that as the needs and preferences of older adults change, they can age in place, downsize, choose rental or ownership or find housing with the appropriate level of supportive services without having to leave the community.*

- Affordable senior housing will be promoted and made available.
- Housing options and alternatives will be part of County planning efforts.
- Visitable and livable options will be included in County planning.
- New and existing construction and redevelopment will consider the needs of both current and prospective older residents.
- The County will assist and encourage efforts to create supportive communities such as villages, co-housing and other options.
- Redevelopment planning will encourage walkable communities.
- Planning efforts will include public-private partnerships as an option to providing housing suitable for older adults.

SOCIALIZATION AND LEISURE

Vision: *Montgomery County will encourage and support vital living of older adults by providing opportunities for physical, mental and social interaction.*

Recreation programs will facilitate socialization and other activities that integrate health and wellness.

- Planning will include in-neighborhood options to make transportation accessible and to make affordable escorted transportation available. Planning will encompass both the needs and safety of pedestrians and those who do not drive.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Vision: Montgomery County will expand public health and prevention programs that promote physical, mental, social and environmental health for older adults.

- Medical care for older adults will be available, accessible and affordable.
- Healthcare providers will be encouraged to accept private and public health insurance including Medicare and Medicaid.
- Direct services and educational programs to plan for serious illness and to manage chronic diseases including promotion of self-management programs will be a priority.
- Access to hearing and dental care will be available.
- Nutrition support including education and meals will be provided.
- Specialized mental health care will be available as an integral part of the health services delivery system.
- Caregiver support will be a priority.
- Services to address cognitive impairment will be available, accessible and affordable for affected older adults and their families and caregivers.

COMMUNICATION

Vision: Montgomery County will distribute and publicize recognizable, understandable, timely and accessible information on County and public resources and services for older adults.

- Information will be understandable and accessible by older adults and their caregivers in diverse ethnic population groups
- Information will clearly state who is eligible for services at no cost and who is eligible at specified costs.
- Information for older adults will be branded uniformly for consistency and recognizable identification
- The County will use and publicize multiple media to disseminate information relevant to older adults, including social media, its regularly updated website and a 24/7 information resource line.

EMPLOYMENT

Vision: Montgomery County will recognize the extent and value of the contribution of older adults to the economy.

- The County will encourage County agencies and private companies to offer employment opportunities as older adults transition to retirement.
- The County will encourage job fairs, partnerships, and forums to help older adults prepare themselves to continue in or reenter the workforce and find jobs.
- The County will provide information that promotes the value of older workers.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

Vision: Montgomery County will provide physical, financial and technological protection and safety for older adults.

- The County will expand its police and fire safety programs targeted toward older adults.
- The County will educate both older adults and their caregivers about the potential for financial crimes, including telephone and computer scams.
- The County's Ombudsman Program will increase its monitoring of the safety of group homes and assisted living facilities.
- The County will work to assure legal protection from financial exploitation of older adults.



Montgomery County Council vote on Senior Agenda, December 4, 2012

"I would hold forward the Commission on Aging as an exemplar and really setting a very, very high standard for other boards and commissions to follow. I want to praise the Commission on Aging, led by its Chair Judy Welles, for taking a number of years to work throughout the community, a very demographically broad effort, to understand the needs of seniors from all backgrounds.

It is a really wide-ranging issue agenda that it researched and put forward that is just what I look for from boards and commissions, substantive policy advice. This has been just a great example of a successful effort by one of our volunteer commissions advising this body and bringing forward a document that I am very confident will have significant influence in our coming budget in 2013 and Fiscal 14 and in the years to come. We all acknowledge that the good news is our population is getting healthier, people are living longer.

We need to plan in the short-term and the long-term for the needs of seniors in all of the areas that are addressed ...This is the Senior Agenda addressing an overall commitment to the needs of older adults, addressing needs in transportation, housing, socialization and leisure, health and wellness, security and safety. Obviously we will need to put our money where our mouth is.

This statement today not only makes an important statement of priorities, but it acknowledge the help and assistance that we have gotten from this Commission. I feel really good about this. I think this is a really successful effort. It is the unanimous recommendation of the HHS Committee and I commend it to the full Council." —

Comments of Councilmember George Leventhal upon introducing a Resolution on the Senior Agenda, approved by unanimous vote of the Montgomery County Council on December 4, 2012.

COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Commission on Aging uses a committee process to develop priorities and positions on budget and legislative matters. Committee members examine issues in depth and make recommendations to the Executive Committee and the full Commission.

The COA meets in full session once each month between September and June and holds committee meetings during the month. Members serve on standing committees, special project groups, and groups that meet during the summer to study in depth key issues affecting seniors. All meetings are open to the public. In addition, the COA holds an annual state legislators' breakfast and a Stakeholder's Forum during the year to stay informed about issues of concern to seniors. The four current standing committees, their missions, and their FY2012 activities are described below.

Aging in Place and Community

The Aging in Place and Community Committee (AIPC) is charged with examining issues involving aging and the choice to remain in one's home or within one's community near family, friends, physicians, and familiar resources. Specifically, the Committee:

- Identifies issues that enable older adults to age either in their own homes or in other environments in the community and provides recommendations to the COA for advising County leaders about these issues.
- Advises COA on advocating for the development and implementation of a transportation and mobility plan that addresses the diverse transportation needs of older adults in the County.
- Monitors implementation of County housing and zoning policies so that older adults have greater choices in dwelling types.

- Recommends action to the COA on relevant issues related to Aging in Place/Community as needed and appropriate.

The AIPC's principal activity this year was to begin developing a plan for a proposed public and private transportation and mobility system. The plan will be responsive to the needs of the County's older adults based on the vision and broad goals of the Senior Agenda. In considering what might be adaptable for a Montgomery County transportation pilot, the committee researched successful escorted transportation programs around the country to learn about relevant funding, fees, driver requirements, coordination, span of service, and technology.

The Commission also supports purpose-built affordable senior housing. The AIPC met with several developers about ways to encourage area developers to include low-income housing for older adults in their building plans. In addition, committee members explored accessibility of housing and visitability to enhance social quality of life. The Committee has monitored the proposed changes in the County's housing and zoning policy and supports accessory housing as a means for older adults to age in place.

The Committee also collaborating with other committees to find ways to prevent social isolation. Senior recreation centers and libraries are very important venues for promoting socialization and for conducting important health services. Therefore, the Committee is recommending additional funding to maintain recreation centers and the needed transportation to help seniors get to these locations.

Finally, the AIPC also was instrumental in developing two Summer Studies: one on feasibility of developing a Senior Ride-Share Program in the County, and another on increasing availability

COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

and affordability of rental housing for seniors. (See Summer Study Section for a full description of the studies and resulting recommendations to the full Commission).

Communication and Community Outreach

The Communication and Community Outreach Committee:

- Identifies resources and makes recommendations for the Commission on Aging to advise the County government on communication and outreach on County programs to meet the needs of the growing and diverse population of older adults;
- Heightens awareness and visibility of the Commission on Aging and its priorities through COA projects;
- Collaborates with other Commission on Aging committees to identify communication needs of County seniors, develop communication messages, and propose communication approaches;
- Supports outreach and communication to stakeholder groups;
- Advises Commission on Aging leadership concerning outreach and communication related to advocacy, including outreach to diverse older adult communities; and
- Produces a monthly cable program for seniors, entitled, "Seniors Today."

In 2012, the Committee continued its work on ways to engage stakeholders, widening outreach to older adults in diverse communities, and providing opportunities to listed directly to the needs of seniors throughout the County.

The Committee began 2012 by reviewing County documents for clarity and uniformity. The com-

mittee continues to seek ways to improve County publications designed specifically for seniors. During the year, members of the Committee attended the Senior Subcabinet work group meetings on Communication held by the Office of Public Information. At these meetings commissioners continued to emphasize the need for County publications on senior services and resources, as well as the need for uniformity of those publications in both appearance and County branding. The Committee continued to stress the need for printed materials for seniors to assist them as they seek out County resources, as many seniors rely on printed media for information.

Throughout the year, the Commission discussed opportunities to engage stakeholders. In spring of 2012, the Committee continued its plan to reach out directly to older adults in the County by initiating a pilot project to listen to the concerns of seniors. Using a town hall format, COA commissioners visited the Gaithersburg Up-County Senior Center. At that meeting, active older adults shared their concerns, needs and suggestions for accessing County services. Additional town hall meetings are planned for 2013.

The Committee focused on the need for data collection to understand the concerns of older adults living in diverse communities. As a result of the Commission's request in a letter to County Executive Leggett, the Senior Subcabinet examined current data collection on diversity, and the County has begun to broaden its data collection on the needs of diverse communities.

The Committee recommended a Commission discussion on the diverse needs of older adults in the County. As a result of this recommendation and the Executive Committee's discussion, a workgroup was formed to plan a panel discussion on the County's diverse communities at the

COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Commission's October meeting. Panelists representing Asian, South Asian, African American, and Hispanic communities spoke at the Commission's meeting in October 2012 and provided insight into issues concerning older residents in diverse communities.

The Committee also discussed the economic value and impact of older adults in the County and supported development of a Summer Study on several aspects of the topic.

The Commission on Aging through the Communications and Outreach Committee, continues to produce the monthly cable television program, Seniors Today. With more than 100 episodes already aired, the popular and long-running cable show, is hosted by Austin Heyman. The show provides a steady source of news and information of interest to older adults residing in Montgomery County. In 2012, guests on the show discussed important legislation affecting seniors, pain management strategies, exercising with Zumba Gold, the health benefits of laughter Yoga, healthy cooking, fire prevention and safety, the implications and the rise of HIV and transmittable diseases in older adults, issues surrounding affordable housing, a job fair devoted to seniors and the Neal Potter Path of Achievement Award winners: Ruby Rubens and Tufail Ahmad.

The Commission continues its efforts to seek and recommend opportunities to introduce viewers, especially caregivers, to Seniors Today. Currently Seniors Today can be seen on Montgomery County Cable TV, the County Government Senior website, and YouTube. A direct email address has been set up to receive comments suggestions, and general feedback from viewers.

Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness Committee mission is to:

- Focus attention on both the physical and mental health needs of seniors;
- Assess and evaluates health and wellness issues; and
- Develop and provide recommendations about health and wellness issues to the Commission for advice to County leaders.

In 2012, the Health and Wellness Committee focused primarily on the problem of social isolation among older adults, but also examined other important topics related to health and aging.

The Committee invited several speakers to address a range of relevant issues, including emergency preparation, the nursing home and assisted living ombudsman program, and training for Montgomery County Police to meet the needs of older adults. In addition, the following speakers addressed the Committee: 1) the Financial Vice President of the Maryland Hospital Association, Mike Robbins; 2) three representatives from local "Villages, which promote the concept of aging in place and community; 3) Yvonne Baskerville of the County's Adult Foster Care unit; and 4) Odile Brunetto, Director of the Area Agency on Aging. The Committee also was updated throughout the year on issues related to Healthy Montgomery, which provides data and information on more than 90 topics. Related to the health and well being of Montgomery County residents.

The Committee's research revealed that problems related to older adults social isolation occur in all types of living situations-private homes, assisted living and nursing homes-and within every community where older adults reside, including ethnic communities. A literature review showed that small neighborhood-focused efforts

COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

appeared to produce the most positive impact on addressing problems of social isolation. This finding led by Committee to recommend that the full Commission advocate for establishment of a Village/Community Coordinator position in Montgomery County.

The Committee co-chairs met with Department of Recreation Director, Gabriel Albornoz, and Phil Smakula, Recreation Supervisor, to discuss problems related to social isolation and to learn more about the Department's relevant perspective and activities.

In addition, the Committee researched the consequences of a Medicaid budget cut that became effective July 1, 2012; this cut eliminated a daily payment to nursing homes to hold the bed for a long-term care Medicaid recipient who was admitted to the hospital.

The Committee also was concerned about an increase in the use of "observation" hospital stays for patients instead of formal admissions, and the repercussions for those patients regarding eligibility for Medicare-financial rehabilitation. The Committee, in support of the Commission's Senior Agenda, also recommended County budget support for increases in funding for caregiver respite programs and for the Senior Outreach Services program, which provides mental health services for home-bound seniors.

In follow-up to the Commission's Legislative Breakfast, the Committee co-chairs, along with John Honig of the Commission's Public Policy Committee and Odile Brunetto, met with state Senator Manno's Director of Legislative Affairs, Lawanda Edwards.

The discussion covered a wide range of issues, including the Medicaid bed hold policy, Medicaid Waiver, and Medical issues in general. During the meeting, Commission members reiterated the importance of the many issues high-

lighted at the breakfast, including elder financial abuse, car title transfer following the death of an elder's spouse, and the importance of absentee voting for frail older adults.

Toward the end of the year, the Health and Wellness Committee and the Aging in Place and Community Committee met to discuss mutual concerns about social isolation. The two committees agreed that social isolation is caused by the effects of physical and social issues that arise in later years and that this topic, along with many other health and wellness concerns, should continue to be a Commission priority.

Public Policy

The Public Policy Committee:

- Examines policies, programs, and proposals of the local, state, and federal governments for their effect on the lives of County seniors;
- Recommends advocacy positions to the Commission;
- Cooperates with legislators and other government officials on design and development of policies and services to enhance the lives of County seniors; and
- Collaborates with other Commission committees on advocacy efforts.

The Public Policy Committee leads the Commission's efforts in public policy advocacy at all levels of government: County, state and federal.

State. During the 2012 state legislative session, the Public Policy Committee was active in Annapolis in support of five bills that passed and became law:

- Protection of Elder Adults from financial abuse by requiring financial institutions to report suspected abuse. The

COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Committee testified in both the Assembly and the Senate in support of this bill.

- The establishment of a task force to study the renovation and repair needs of senior homeowners. Letters were sent in support of this legislation.
- Aid to low-income seniors to help meet the costs of Medicare prescription drug policies. The Commission sent letters in support of this program.
- Reinstatement of funds for the ombudsman program monitors nursing home care. The Commission sent a letter in support, and Montgomery County was able to retain staffing.
- Funds for the UpCounty Senior Center in Gaithersburg were obtained. These funds helped to renovate the kitchen facilities. A letter was sent in support.

The COA supported some other pieces of legislation that did not pass. However, in addition to testifying and sending letters, COA meetings with legislators and their staffs were crucial in informing them of our concerns. COA members traveled to Annapolis during the legislative session to meet with state senators and delegates on legislative priorities.

The Commission is proud that it either initiated or gave major shape to these bills. The Commission appreciates the work of the delegates and senators who ushered these bills through the General Assembly.

The Public Policy Committee organized the Commission's legislative breakfast for State senators and delegates from Montgomery County. Eighteen of our legislators attended. The breakfast meeting, held in November 2012, was a valuable opportunity for the Commission and elected offi-

cial to discuss legislative initiatives relating to seniors.



Members of the COA and the non-profit Grass Roots Organization for the Well-Being of Seniors (GROWS) on the bus to Annapolis, March 2012, to advocate for legislative priorities.

County. Members of the Commission, armed with talking points for aligning budget priorities to the Senior Agenda, met with each member of the County Council. On behalf of the Commission, the Council's HHS Committee urged the Council to adopt adequate funding for essential safety-net services for seniors in the FY13 budget. Following testimony by the Commission, the Council adopted a resolution that basically incorporates the Commission's vision of the needs of seniors as enunciated in the Senior Agenda.

Federal. Led by the Public Policy Committee, the Commission sent several letters to Montgomery County's U.S. representatives and senators about federal issues, notably budget priorities. The Older Americans Act has come up for renewal, but has not yet passed. Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid were under attack in various budget discussions.

Other. The Public Policy Committee held a meeting with five Senior Center directors or their representative to ascertain their needs and those of the many seniors attending their pro-

COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

grams. They also recommended consideration of new programs that should be established to serve those with special disabilities.



COA Legislative Breakfast

1. Deleate Anne Kaiser
2. Delegate Kumar Barve
3. Senator Roger Manno
4. Del. Bonnie Cullison, Del. Jennie Forehand, COA Charles Kauffman, Del. Bill Frick, COA Miriam Kelty and Beth Shapiro

FY12 Stakeholders' Forum

Background. The Commission on Aging (COA) reaches out to groups and organizations that provide services to or advocate for seniors in Montgomery County. The Commission refers to these groups and organizations as Stakeholders. The partnership between the COA and stakeholders results in a more unified voice to influence County decisions concerning seniors. The Commission meets with Stakeholders at least annually, and Stakeholders have the opportunity and are encouraged to attend Commission, Committee, and Summer Study meetings.

2012 Stakeholders' Forum. In February 2012 the Commission hosted a Stakeholders' Forum entitled "Needs of Seniors in Diverse Communities." Data show that Montgomery County has the largest share in the state of Asians and Hispanics aged 65 and older. Fifty-eight percent of all Asian seniors and almost 57 percent of all Hispanic seniors residing in Maryland live in Montgomery County. The goal of the Stakeholders' Forum was to identify best practices shown to reach older adults in diverse communities. To reach this goal, Stakeholders and Commission members discussed current approaches and identified unmet needs and possible solutions.



Participants at COA Annual Stakeholders' Forum, February 2012

FY12 Stakeholders' Forum



COA Vice Chair, Tamara Duell at Stakeholder's Forum, February 2012

Information provided at this Forum was to guide the Commission in advising the County Executive and the County Council.

Forty Stakeholders participated at this Forum, including providers, consumers, and advocacy groups. Breakout groups covered four discussion areas: housing, trans-

portation, socialization, and health. Discussions generated considerable insight into issues of concern, as well as a number of potential solutions. A summary of these discussions and possible solutions was shared with the attendees after the Forum.

It was clear that there are unmet needs in a County with an increasingly diverse and older population. While there are many approaches to meet the needs of a diverse older population in Montgomery County, a great deal remains to be done. Concerns raised at this Forum became a priority for the Commission moving forward. The Commission and its committees are discussing these concerns on an ongoing basis and are incorporating them as appropriate into the Commission's advice to the County Executive and County Council. Finally stakeholders also urged increased communication among the stakeholder groups and organizations in meeting the needs of seniors in Montgomery County diverse communities

Plans for 2013 Stakeholders' Forum. In October 2012, the Commission began its planning efforts for the 2013 Stakeholders' Forum. The intent is to bring together government, providers, advocates, and business leaders for a dialogue on making Montgomery County a "Community for a Lifetime," a place where older adults can live safe, healthy, and vital



Stakeholder breakout session on health led by Commissioners Beth Shapiro and John Honig

lives. The Commission's Senior Agenda, adopted by the County Executive and County Council, sets a vision and goals for a "Community for a Lifetime." The next step for COA is to consult with the County staff about the County's plans for seniors and for making the goals of the Senior Agenda a reality.

The Commission has invited a panel of key County officials to lead the discussion based on their experiences and responsibilities related to older adults in four priority areas: transportation, recreation, health/socialization, and housing. Insights into current County activities, as well as the County's future plans in these important areas, can serve as a blueprint for the Senior Agenda's infrastructure. We expect to see additional opportunities for Stakeholder participation in COA Committees, ad hoc workgroups, and possible Summer Studies to provide further input on implementing the Senior Agenda. These recommendations would form the basis for Commission advice to the County on the implementation of the Senior Agenda.

The Commission is optimistic that through past, present, and future coordinated activities with Stakeholders, older adults in Montgomery County will benefit from highlighted interest in issues affecting them. ■

FY12 Summer Studies

COA Commissioners voted on proposals for Summer Studies at the Commission's annual meeting in May based on concept papers submitted by members that identified issues for in-depth examination and discussion. In addition to Commission members, stakeholders, County government officials and County Council members participated in these open summer study meetings,

adding their insights and expertise to the sessions. Among participants this year were Council members George Leventhal, Nancy Floreen, and Marc Elrich; Steve Silverman, Director of the Department of Economic Development, and representatives of Action in Montgomery (AIM), GROWS, Renters Alliance, Vital Living Network, and Jewish Council on Aging, among others.

Transportation and Ride Share

The Aging in Place/Community Committee (APIC) conducted a Summer Study to examine a transportation option, Ride-Share, in which two or more individuals who are traveling to the same destination or on route to the destination, share the cost of a ride in a taxi, bus, car, or shuttle.

Montgomery County has many transportation options available to residents, including several that are designed to meet the needs of older adults. However, many of these options are not affordable or accessible to those in need. Ride-sharing would fill a gap in currently provided services. The Transportation Summer Study group explored ride-share programs around the country with the intent of recommending best



Participants in Summer Study Discussion Group

practices and/or models that could be included in a comprehensive and coordinated transportation plan for Montgomery County.

Ride-share has been successful in several communities. Benefits include: conservation of environment; reduced road congestion; and reduced cost to individual as

compared with solo driving. In addition, it can serve the needs of underserved groups, such as people with disabilities or those who cannot afford cars. Those who do not require escort service but may be unable to get to public routes can use it to travel upon request from door to door.

Software scheduling programs are available to coordinate ride-share services and are being used in other communities. These Web-based programs match riders with drivers and/or vehicles traveling to desired destinations at particular times. Some programs require an administrator, while others are managed by users directly.

The Committee made the following recommendations toward developing a door-to-door ride-share program in Montgomery County:

- Explore the feasibility of using drivers and vehicles that transport people to and from senior centers for door-to-door ride-share services during off hours.
- Identify groups currently providing senior transportation and promote coordinating services so that more people could be served

FY12 Summer Studies

in a cost-efficient manner.

- Develop a communication plan delineating those transportation options that already exist and advocate for coordination of these options, along with a ride-share program.

Rental Housing for Seniors

A Summer Study on rental housing for seniors resulted in the following recommendations to the Commission:

- No net loss in the affordable rental housing stock should occur in Montgomery County;
- Goals should be set for new construction of affordable rental housing over upcoming years;
- Housing Initiative Funding should be increased to \$55 million dollars by 2014. The extra dollars should be used to fund new, affordable rental housing and to maintain existing affordable housing;
- Advocacy by the Commission on Aging through its Public Policy Committee at both County and State levels for continuing the current Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC). LIHTC is the major federal funding program for low-income housing.
- Priority should be given for use of County excess land for the construction of affordable senior housing. Free land is one tool to be used in developing affordable senior housing.
- The Commission on Aging, through its Public Policy Committee, should advocate at both County and State levels for continuing the current Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC). LIHTC is the major federal funding program for low-income housing.
- The COA's Public Policy Committee should perform research and advocate for the State of Maryland to support affordable housing that is

solely dedicated for senior use.

The Summer Study made two additional recommendations for the AIPC Committee to consider over the longer term:

- 1) a study of the benefits and drawbacks of rent stabilization in Montgomery County as a tool for providing affordable rental housing for older adults, and
- 2) a study of set-aside program of new Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) specifically for seniors in each new development that requires an MPDU set-aside.

Economic Value of Contributions of Older Adults to the Economy

The summer provided an opportunity for a well-timed study of the economic value of older adults in the County. The study explored the value of seniors on the economy, as well as the value of employing older adults. Several recommendations resulted from this study. The Commission requested a meeting in 2013 with the Department of Economic Development on promoting public-private, older adult-oriented partnerships to help provide business opportunities for older adults and to encourage business services for an age-friendly community for a lifetime.

The basic objective of this Summer Study was to help the COA achieve some of its stated 2012 Agenda goals by understanding what efforts are being made by County Government and the local business community to cater to and to take advantage of the economic value that its older adult population brings to the County and State.

FY12 Summer Studies

Specific goals of this Summer Study Program were to:

- Understand the need to identify, develop, and use appropriate statistics to explore the value of the contributions made to the economy by the older adult population and to determine how to quantify this value and learn what relevant statistics exist.
- Determine whether or not the business community and/or the government are aware of or even appreciate the value of the contributions of older adults to the economy.

Commission members Jerry Morenoff and Charles Kauffman chaired this study. Ten Commission members participated in this summer study, along with representatives from AARP, GROWS, the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, the Jewish Council on Aging, the Vital Living Network, and the Montgomery Business Development Corporation.

Participants also included: County Council members George Leventhal and Roger Berliner; Director of the County's Department of Economic Development Steve Silverman; and the Director of the County's Department of Health and Human Services, Uma S. Ahluwalia.

The following recommendations represent the consensus of summer study participants:

- Prepare a COA presentation that emphasizes the economic value of older adults to the community, provides data and information regarding the changing demographics and graying of the County, and encourages businesses to explore new opportunities with and for older adults. Ask the COA's Communications and Community Outreach Committee to develop a plan incorporating the

presentation for COA outreach to ethnically and geographically diverse Chambers of Commerce and other appropriate groups, such as trade associations.

- Encourage the County's Department of Economic Development to greatly expand its current outreach focus in order to promote public-private, older adult-oriented partnerships. Such partnerships will help provide business opportunities for older adults and small businesses that serve older adults and will encourage businesses to develop services for an age-friendly community for a lifetime.
- Include a public-private partnership discussion at the COA stakeholders meeting in February 2013 that at a minimum addresses business and employment opportunities for senior adults, and that views seniors as a viable target consumer market; and a viable constituent group with political, economic, and social leverage.
- Take appropriate action through the COA Public Policy Committee to help revise the Maryland health insurance regulation(s) that disincentivize small businesses from hiring older adults.

After presentation of these Summer Study recommendations to the full Commission, the Commission approved the recommendations and is now incorporating them for follow-up consideration in Commission on Aging committees. ■

LOOKING FOR SERVICES FOR SENIORS?

Visit Montgomery Senior Site for information on



- **Caregiving**
- **Consumer Issues**
- **Health**
- **Recreation and Libraries**
- **Safety**
- **Senior Housing**
- **Taxes and Finance**
- **Transportation**

Montgomery Senior Site is designed to provide information on County services in one easy-to-find place.

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/seniors

Please contact 240-777-3000 or dial 311

Email: hhsmail@montgomerycountymd.gov



Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director

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