



## Newsletter August 2009

CoA represents a strategic investment and good government!

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### New Proposals Put Commission on Aging At-Risk

With the population of aging residents on the verge of explosion (increasing by 64% by 2030), the CoA is the only legislative commission targeted by the Governor for elimination.

Instead of eliminating or drastically cutting the budget by 53% (as also proposed), the CoA asks legislators to consider a reduction of 20-30%. The CoA is a [Strategic Investment](#) and part of the solution! In illustration, this spring alone the CoA identified millions of dollars worth of untapped federal funds. Additionally, CoA's long-term care recommendations have the potential to save hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Unfortunately, the 53% budget reduction proposal would:

- **Silence** the independent voice for older adults in state government.
- **Decimate** the already lean CoA, reducing its small 4-person staff to 2 - resulting in **state layoffs**. As the legislative Commission with the least staff (sharing this distinction with the African-American Affairs Commission), a 53% reduction would be especially devastating.
- **Dismantle oversight** within state government for older adults. As an example, in the spring of 2009, CoA's oversight found up to \$11 million in new federal funds that would have been left in Washington without CoA perseverance.
- **Undermine Results-Based Accountability (RBA)**. The CoA worked with the Appropriations Committee, its RBA subcommittee, the consultants and its peers to develop an exemplary RBA model. *Shouldn't RBA be used as it was intended?*
- **Dishonor the legislative process**. The Governor's proposal concerning the CoA resulted in two legislative hearings with speaker after speaker testifying on behalf of the effectiveness and importance of the CoA. Additionally, **older constituents sent over 6,000 postcards** to members of the legislature and the Governor stating "Don't cut or eliminate the CoA!"

*"As a fiscally conservative citizen and taxpayer, I urge policymakers to fully support the CoA as it's an exemplary model for lean, effective, and results-based government."*

**Bill Eddy, CoA Treasurer**



*"The elimination and/or devaluing of the Commission on Aging hurts all of us, and, more importantly, hurts older adults. We must let the Governor and the Legislature know that this is not acceptable."*

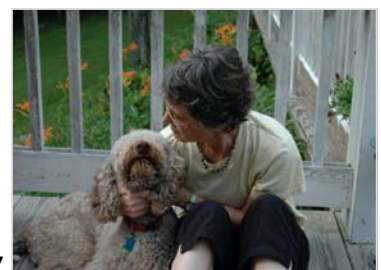
**Dianne Stone, Director,  
Newington Senior and Disabled Center**

*"In our efforts to reduce state spending we have to be careful not to be penny-wise and pound-foolish. This is not the time to cut funding to the Commission that provides the structure for moving evidence into policy."*

**Dorothy Baker, Ph.D., Research Scientist,  
Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, Yale University**

*"More frequently frail and less able to speak for themselves than their younger counterparts, older people's interests and related public policy could quickly fade into the background. The work performed by the independent Commission is not duplicated by any other entity within or without government. The Commission is indispensable!"*

**Judith Stein, JD  
Executive Director,  
Center for Medicare  
Advocacy**



## Governor Rell, Senator McKinney and Representative Cafero Appoint/Reappoint CoA Members

Just this month: Governor Rell appointed Jeanne Franklin of Westport to the CoA board. According to Governor Rell, Ms. Franklin “will serve for a term ending August 15, 2013.” The Governor also re-appointed Bill Eddy of Simsbury.

At the same time, Senate Republican Leader John McKinney appointed Susan Tomanio of Bethel and reappointed Sharon Gesek of Seymour.

House Republican Leader Lawrence Cafero re-appointed Richard Memmott of West Haven and Judy Jencks of Lisbon. Together they bring years of experience on older adult issues to the board. The CoA members are unpaid, volunteer citizens making a difference.



Jeanne Franklin



Susan Tomanio



Sharon Gesek



Bill Eddy



Richard Memmott



Judy Jencks

## CoA Convenes Roundtable Discussion with Speaker Donovan, Representative Catherine Abercrombie and Leaders in the Aging Network

CoA convened a roundtable discussion on August 26th at the Meriden Senior Center with Speaker Donovan, Representative Abercrombie, Meriden Senior Center Director John Hogarth, Meriden Health and Human Services Social Worker Rita Kowlachik and members of the Long-Term Care Advisory Council (LTCAC).

- Catch a re-play of the event—[see CT-N’s daily schedule](#).
- [LTCAC Response to Proposed Budget Cuts](#)



CoA Executive Director Julie Evans Starr and **Speaker of the House of Representatives Chris Donovan** at the August 26 roundtable in Meriden.

## CoA Participates in Legislators’ Senior Fairs

CoA has again been invited by legislators to participate in senior fairs across the state. The first of a series of fairs was held by Senator Colapietro at Bristol Eastern High School on August 26th. Pending adequate funding, CoA is looking forward to participating in events hosted by **Senator Gomes, Senator Musto, Senator Meyer and Senator Handley**.

CoA members or staff may be available to participate in additional senior fairs. Please call our office @ 240-5200 for more information.



CoA staffers Deb Polun and Rob Norton talk with **President Pro Tempore Donald Williams** at a Senior Fair in Danielson last December

## CoA Seeks Quick Legislative Fix to Maximize Federal Funds ~ for the implementer bill

The CoA is working to maximize federal funds (requiring zero state dollars) through simple legislation that allows the conversion of Section 202 HUD housing into assisted living facilities. For example, Horace Bushnell Housing in Hartford was awarded federal funds for the National Assisted Living Conversion Program and completed the necessary modifications to the facility. Unfortunately, due to present state law they cannot proceed. With an easy legislative fix, this opportunity can be realized and services will be provided for people to “age in place.” This no-cost proposal would expedite Money Follows the Person by helping those transitioning out of nursing homes.

- Read more about this important [legislative fix](#)

*CoA staff recently visited Horace Bushnell and heard story after story about residents who were forced to leave their independence behind - and enter into institutions - due to overly restrictive state and federal rules.*

*One gentleman who had lived and thrived in the congregate housing facility for years could no longer prepare meals for himself. The state’s only solution was to put him in a nursing home. He was devastated. Not only will state taxpayers pay more for his care but federal funds that paid for his housing have been lost.*

*Together, we can change this...*

## CoA's Oversight Activity Results in Millions of Untapped Federal Funds

**Good News!** Thanks, in part, to CoA's perseverance, the Money Follows the Person (MFP) protocol was resubmitted to CMS to fully maximize millions of new, federal funds previously left on the table. In late May, the CoA detected a trend with the MFP transitions that CT is only receiving the extra federal money (Medicaid enhanced match) on approximately half of the people being transitioned out of nursing homes under MFP. Currently, of the 54 people who have been transitioned, CT has only received the enhanced match on 31. This oversight activity of the CoA has the potential to bring into the state up to 11 million dollars.

- Read more about this [quick fix to obtain new federal dollars](#)
- Read CoA Executive Director Julia Evans Starr's [letter in the Hartford Courant](#) that helped turn the curve on this issue
- Read a [fact sheet about MFP](#) prepared by the CoA

## CoA Tracks Implications of State's Retiree Incentive Program

Approximately 3800 state employees have taken the state's Retirement Incentive Program (RIP). This is 800 more than anticipated and represents significant downsizing of state government during this \$8.5 - billion budget crisis. However, real concern persists that the most vulnerable state residents will be unable to receive the services they need. For example, as a result of retirements, the Department of Social Services will reduce social workers' contact with individuals with disabilities who are living in the community to once-a-year check-in phone calls.

Meanwhile, state agencies have lost thousands of years of institutional knowledge and specialized expertise. The retirements bring with them an urgent need for intra-agency reorganization and employee succession planning for the future.

- Read more about the implications of [employee retirements on state government](#)



WTIC Radio 1080: Julia Evans Starr interviews guest Pam Giannini DSS State Unit on Aging Director to talk about RIP and aging related topics.

## Hot Topics!

- CoA updates "[Inside the Dome Report](#)"
- [CoA Annual Report](#)
- CoA Tracks [Older Adults/Federal Stimulus Package](#)
- CoA Updates its [Medicaid Waiver "Silo" Chart](#)
- CoA and MFP Workforce Workgroup Seeks [Input on Workforce Development Initiatives](#)
- CoA Maintains [State Program Closures/Modifications Updates](#)
- CoA Provides Critical Analysis of CT's draft Long-Term Care Plan
- CoA Submits Comments to the Federal Government for a Progressive Medicaid Structure

## About the Commission on Aging

*Working at the State Capitol and beyond to ensure a brighter future for our state and for older adults of today and tomorrow*

### CoA Board Members Represent Volunteerism at Its Best!

Don Dimenstein, New Haven  
William Eddy, Simsbury  
Jeanne Franklin, Westport  
Sharon Gesek, Seymour  
Raymond Guenter, West Hartford  
Nancy Sullivan Hodkoski, Torrington  
Judith M. Jencks, Lisbon  
Gerard J. Kerins, New Haven  
Waldo C. Klein, Storrs  
Mary Ellen Klinck, East Haddam  
Christine M. Lewis (Chair), South Windsor  
Patricia Mayfield, Waterbury  
Richard Memmott, Sr., West Haven  
Carol Tillman Parrish, Hartford  
Jim Pellegrino, Meriden  
Susan Tomanio, Bethel  
Carolyn Thornberry, West Hartford  
Penny Young, New Canaan

[Ex Officio Members](#) - please click here



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Looking for information about long-term care services and supports?  
Visit CT's Long-Term Care Services and Supports website - [www.ct.gov/longtermcare](http://www.ct.gov/longtermcare)