



Newsletter May 2009

CoA Celebrates Older Americans Month!

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CoA Hosts Forum on the Federal Stimulus Package: *What's It Mean for Connecticut's Aging Population?*

On May 20th, 80 people gathered in the Legislative Office Building to learn how the Federal Stimulus Package will impact older adults in our state. Almost 60 state programs, including Medicaid, home-delivered meals, weatherization and senior employment will receive \$3.5 billion in extra funding to stimulate the economy and help those most affected by the recession. Featured speakers Spencer Cain, from the legislature's Office of Fiscal Analysis, and Pamela Giannini, from the Department of Social Services, provided information about these and other programs. Panelists Adrienne Parkmond, Joel Sekorski and Deb Polun provided additional insight. The forum provided an opportunity for policymakers, social services providers, consumers and others to hear some good news and exchange ideas on how to maximize the opportunities available with this funding.



Elaine Werner, Community Liaison for U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, takes notes during the CoA's May 20th federal stimulus package forum.

Click here:

- [Watch the forum \(shown live and recorded by CT-N\)](#)
- [Highlights of the forum](#)
- [Materials from the forum](#)
- [One-time Social Security stimulus check for nursing home residents... Who Keeps the Money?](#)

The CoA, and Other Legislative Commissions, Embrace Results-Based Accountability (RBA)

The CoA, and other Legislative Commissions, have been working with the RBA Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee to design an RBA framework to focus, articulate and communicate our distinct mandates and work. Through a collaborative process, CoA crafted an overarching Population Result of "All present and future older adults in CT live in the secure, healthy and productive environment of their choice." CoA has collected data on several indicators and will continue to follow trends so that we can educate policymakers about emerging issues affecting our aging population.

Click here:

- For sample of the [CoA's RBA work](#)
- [Want to know more about RBA?](#)

The CoA and the other Legislative Commissions have also worked with the Appropriations Committee on alternative budgets for the next biennium that represent a 20% reduction to our budgets. CoA is grateful to the committee members for their ongoing support and commitment. We accept the challenge of "doing more with less" as we move forward next year and into the future.

CoA Presents Solutions for a More Efficient State Government that Works for the People

As part of our core strategies, CoA brings forward national data, best practices and trends to inform policymakers.

For example: CoA puts forward proposals to streamline long-term care systems change that help CT residents get the care and services they need. Long-Term Care (LTC) systems change can save the state close to \$600 million annually.

An illustration of a system in need of dire change: [Break Down the Silos!](#) CoA created this graphic representation of CT's fragmented Medicaid LTC home and community-based services system (HCBS).

The CoA will continue to present to policymakers, including the [Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes](#), meaningful systemic changes to streamline and improve state government that yield real cost-savings and enhanced quality of life.

CoA Rolls up its Sleeves to Safeguard/Advance Money Follows the Person (MFP)

MFP is a \$56 million dollar federal demonstration grant that is intended to rebalance the long-term care system so that individuals have maximum independence and choice concerning where they live and receive services. While very important, transitioning 700-5000 people with disabilities and older adults out of nursing homes and back into the community is only one of five major goals of MFP.

Easy Legislative Fix Needed: Legislation is needed to allow DECD to establish additional subsidized assisted living projects in order to provide housing opportunities for those who are awaiting transition under MFP. This no-cost proposal would expedite MFP.

Continued Legislative Support Needed for the Long-Term Care Reinvestment Account:

MFP will receive \$11 million dollars as an enhanced Medicaid match on participants of MFP being transitioned out of nursing homes. Continued commitment by the Legislature is needed to safeguard the [long-term care reinvestment account](#) so that these new federal funds can be reinvested into the home and community-based system (per mandate of the federal government).

CoA presents solution to DOUBLE the enhanced match (millions of new federal dollars). Call our office now!

Hundreds of People in the Pipeline: So far, 37 people have been transitioned and are now living in the environment of their choice. 700 nursing home residents are in the pipeline, having applied to the MFP program. What's this mean? Staff and transition coordinators are determining eligibility, completing assessments, developing care plans, finding housing, coordinating services, etc.

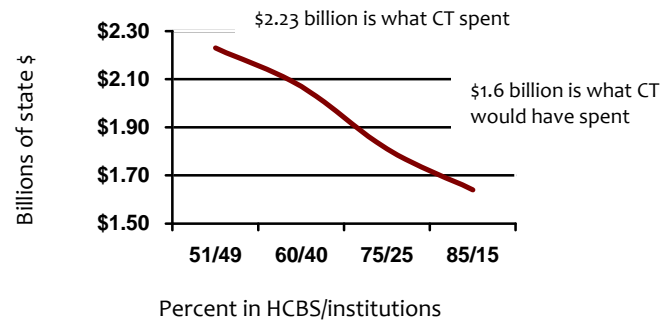
More MFP Staff Needed: The state hiring freeze has kept two federally funded positions unfilled in the MFP office, slowing transitions. Executive branch approval is needed to fill these positions.

See these CoA Fact Sheets for more Information:

- [LTC Reinvestment Account](#)
- [MFP: The Whole Picture](#)

If CT's LTC Medicaid System was modeled after Oregon

CT would have saved \$590 million in '06 and served 35% more people in HCBS



Source: LTC Needs Assessment 2006

Did you know?

CoA Chairs
MFP Workforce
Development Workgroup

And serves as an
active member
of the diverse & dynamic
MFP Steering Committee



Dawn Lambert, Project Director for MFP, is interviewed by Julie Evans Starr on WTIC-1080's Living Well CT

CoA Legislative Update – Negotiations begin



(from left) State Representatives Deborah Heinrich, Susan Johnson, Michelle Cook, Barbara Lambert, Theresa Conroy, and Beth Bye @ a CoA 2009 legislative briefing

While leaders participate in budget negotiations, CoA continues to educate policymakers with data related to issues that impact older adults and their families.

April/ May Session Highlights: CT Home Care Program will now cover personal care assistants ([PA 09-64](#))...a Silver Alert system will help locate missing individuals ([SB 451](#), passed in concurrence)...the Alzheimer's Respite Care program expands eligibility and becomes more flexible ([PA 09-75](#))...residents of Residential Care Homes will be able to establish Special Needs Trusts to allow them to remain in the community ([PA 09-73](#))...extra payments that CT residents receive through the federal stimulus package (e.g., the extra \$250 for Social Security recipients) will not count against them when applying for state programs such as ConnPACE ([PA 09-3](#)).

Sample of other Legislative Items of Interest:

Continued support for: independent oversight agencies (including the LTC Ombudsman and the Legislative Commissions), the LTC Reinvestment Account (PA-180), Medicare Part D Wrap Around, and the current Definition of Medical Necessity.

CoA Partners with State Dept. of Education and Capitol Region Education Council to Bring “Earth’s Elders” to After-School Programs



The CoA/Earth’s Elders Foundation Connecticut school curriculum program was introduced to after-school program coordinators from throughout the state on May 5th. The curriculum program, offered free of charge to schools statewide since 2007, is designed to connect students with older adults through a unique educational experience.

The CoA is grateful to CREC and SDE, who have made grant opportunities (federal funds) available to help support after school programs that adopt this program.

The Earth’s Elders program supports the commission’s multi-faceted strategies to help people of advanced years – as well as persons with disabilities – be welcomed, respected and integral members of their communities.

"This project bridges the generations in unique and powerful ways and creatively complements the commission's overarching RBA 'Population Result' goal to help enhance the quality of life for older adults," said CoA Executive Director Julia Evans Starr.

Click here for more information about the [CoA’s Earth’s Elders Initiative](#).

Snapshot of CoA in the News and around the State

WTIC Radio's "Living Well CT" Program: Julie Evans Starr invited Dawn Lambert to talk about the MFP program. Other recent guests include Elaine Zimmerman, Executive Director of the Commission on Children, and Joe Stango, an advocate for homecare

CoA Communications Director Rob Norton appeared on Torrington "Senior Works" on WAPJ-FM, a Torrington-based radio station show to talk about the work of the CoA and a variety of aging issues.

CoA joins Independent Transportation Network of North Central CT 'First Ride' Celebration on April 27th. CoA has been actively involved in the legislative work that has led to the launch of this program and others like it in the state. ITN uses a combination of volunteer and paid drivers to provide rides 24/7, 365 days a year in private cars rather than buses or vans.

[Click here for more information about ITNs](#)



Margaret Smith Hale, Executive Director of ITN of North Central CT, is flanked by Lisa Holbrook, of ITN's national headquarters and Julia Evans Starr, CoA Executive Director.

Hot Topics!

- **May is Older Americans Month!** ["Living Today for a Better Tomorrow"](#)
- DSS closes intake to two programs: [Statewide Respite Care Program](#) & the Community-Based Services Program
- Thousands of experienced state employees are taking early retirement (more information to come)
- [Second Aging and Disability Resource Center \(ADRC\) Opens in Waterbury Area](#)
- [The Elder Economic Security Initiative](#)

About the Connecticut Commission on Aging

CoA

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

CoA Members Represent Volunteerism at Its Best!

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[Ex-Officio Members](#) ~ click here for a list of CoA ex officio non-voting members



CoA Staff Team: Deb Migneault, Julia Evans Starr, Rob Norton, Deb Polun
(photo: Bob Caroti)

Visit us on the Web!

www.cga.ct.gov/coa

Looking for information about long-term care services and supports?

Visit CT's Long-Term Care Services and Supports website - www.ct.gov/longtermcare