

CCoA
California Commission on Aging

AGEWATCH

AoA Assistant Secretary Greenlee meets with Commission on Aging

U.S. Administration on Aging Assistant Secretary Kathy Greenlee met with the California Commission on Aging during her two-day visit to Sacramento in November. Assistant Secretary Greenlee, who oversees the Administration on Aging as part of her role as head of the Administration for Community Living (ACL), discussed positive changes at the federal level from creation of new agency, passage of the Elder Justice Act as part of the Affordable Care Act, as well as the challenge of supporting programs during lean budget times.



Assistant Secretary Kathy Greenlee

Greenlee congratulated the Commission for its work on elder justice policy and expressed her continued commitment to strengthening protections for vulnerable elderly and dependent adults. Despite a lack of funding for the Elder Justice Act, the Assistant Secretary touted the positive work of the Elder



CCoA Outgoing Chair Bert Bettis, Assistant Secretary Greenlee, and CCoA Incoming Chair Virgie Walker

Justice Coordinating Council, her collaboration with the Department of Justice (DOJ) on the first White House Elder Abuse Symposium in 2012, and a new collaboration between AoA and DOJ to develop a nationwide data collection system for Adult Protective Services.

House Budget Deal Would Extend Cuts to Medicare

House budget negotiators reached a two-year budget agreement last week, potentially staving-off any government shut-downs for the remainder of the federal fiscal year. As reported in California HealthLine, the agreement raises discretionary spending by \$63 billion, thereby restoring some of the cuts made earlier in the year through sequestration at the same time it lowers the federal deficit by \$23 billion. The increased funding will be shared equally by domestic programs and military spending. The increase would be offset in part through continuation of the 2% Medicare reimbursement cuts imposed by sequestration until 2023.

A late amendment to the agreement would postpone for three months the 24% physician reimbursement rate cut imposed by sequestration and increase current reimbursement rates by .5% over three years. The resulting "patch" makes additional changes that lessen the sequestration impacts on Medicare and Medicaid. The deal makes no changes to Medicare benefits.

To read more, visit www.californiahealthline.org/articles/2013/12/11/bipartisan-budget-deal-proposal-would-extend-medicare-cuts. Information from California Health Care Foundation, Bipartisan Budget Deal Would Extend Medicare Cuts, California HealthLine, December 11, 2013 and House approves bipartisan budget deal that includes 'doc fix', December 13, 2013.

AGEWATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834.

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Commission on Aging announces new officers for 2014



Virgie P. Walker

The California Commission on Aging chose new officers during its November 2013 meeting in Sacramento. The Commission elected Virgie P. Walker of Carson to Chair the Executive Committee in the coming year, and Marian Last of Rossmoor as Vice Chair. Commissioner Walker is President & CEO of People Coordinated Services of Southern California and was appointed by Assembly Speaker Karen Bass in 2009. Ms. Last is a retired Community and Senior Services Manager from the City of El Monte and was appointed to the Commission by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2010.



Marian Last

Others elected to the Executive Committee include Donna Benton of Los Angeles, Lucy Fisher of San Francisco, Carmen Reyes, of Whittier and Ed Walsh from Rancho Mirage. Bert Bettis of Wilton remains on the Committee as Immediate Past Chair.

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December, 2013

Social Security Administration to go paperless by February, 2014

As of February 2014, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will no longer offer Social Security number (SSN) printouts and benefit verification information in their field offices. However, to ensure a smooth transition, they will continue providing these services if requested until April 2014. SSA is making these changes to meet the increasing demands for their services at the same time that the agency budget has been significantly cut by over \$1B in each of the last three years.

With the transition, SSA believes the new technology will provide more convenient, cost-effective, and secure options for customers to obtain certain services without visiting a local office. As a result of the changes, SSA beneficiaries and recipients needing a benefit verification letter can obtain one immediately by registering for a **“my Social Security account,”** or **through the mail within 5-7 days** by calling SSA's national toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213.

SSA is asking agencies to help by using available data exchanges to acquire necessary verifications **and, when possible, assisting the public with using “my Social Security”** at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount/>, or contacting them to request a replacement Social Security card.

Excerpted from NASUAD Friday Update - December 6, 2013

Adult Day Program stakeholders plan for program renewal

Stakeholders interested in influencing the plan to continue California's adult day health program met in Sacramento early in December. With renewal of the Community-Based Adult Services program due in May of 2014, the workgroup met to explore what is going well with the program, what needs fixing, and to address remaining unresolved issues.

The CBAS workgroup covered dozens of facets of care for the frail population but also managed to skip over one of the central issues of the waiver renewal -- the state requirement that all CBAS centers shift to not-for-profit status. The next stakeholder meeting is scheduled Jan. 9 in Sacramento.

State officials expect the Department of Health Care Services to talk to CMS in February 2014 to broach the amendment of the 1115 waiver to include the CBAS program. That waiver has to be submitted to CMS in May, three months before the CBAS waiver is due to expire in August. *Excerpted from STATE, STAKEHOLDERS WORK TO RENEW COMMUNITY-BASED ADULT SERVICES, California Health Line December 4, 2013.*

Comments sought on the National Family Caregiver Support Program

The Administration for Community Living is directing a national, comprehensive evaluation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP). The evaluation will assess the impact of the program at several levels and will document how NFCSP goals are being met and how programs are being implemented in the field. Details about the evaluation goals and process are available on the Federal Register webpage.

The Federal Register Notice for public comment regarding the proposed NFCSP Evaluation information collection activities was posted on November 20, 2013 and is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/11/20/2013-27822/agency-information-collection-activities-submission-for-omb-review-comment-request-oaa-title-iii-e>

Written or electronic comments on the proposed information collection activities must be submitted to Alice-Lynn.Ryssman@acl.hhs.gov by January 21, 2014.

Information from NASUAD Friday Update - December 6, 2013.

CFPB Seeks Advocate Feedback on Illegal Debt Collection Practices

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) reports that more consumer complaints are received about debt collectors than about any other single industry. The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) prohibits debt collectors from engaging in unfair, deceptive, abusive, and other unlawful collection practices, but until recently, no Federal agency was vested with authority to issue general implementing regulations prior to the creation of the CFPB. The CFPB is considering whether rules governing the collection of debts are warranted under the FDCPA or other CFPB authorities, and if so what types of rules would be appropriate.

The CFPB is taking the first step towards considering new consumer protection rules for the debt collection market. Through the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR), the CFPB is collecting information on a wide array of debt collection topics. The ANPR asks several questions about issues that may be of particular interest to older consumers.

The CFPB requests information from advocates with firsthand knowledge about debt collection issues that affect older consumers. Visit <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail:D=CFPB-2013-0033> to learn more and to post your comments to CFPB staff.

Information from NASUAD Friday Update - December 6, 2013.

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New AARP Report demonstrates the need for caregiver assessments

The AARP Public Policy Institute has released a new research report entitled, *Listening to Family Caregivers: The Need to Include Family Caregiver Assessment in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Service Waiver Programs*. The report presents findings from a 50-state survey examining how well the needs of family caregivers are assessed during the process of evaluation of older people and adults with disabilities who qualify for Medicaid home- and community-based services (HCBS) programs.

This report is the first detailed analysis of family caregiver assessment tools and processes in use by the states in Medicaid waiver programs. The report also highlights promising practices in family caregiver assessment in three states, and offers policy recommendations to expand HCBS to strengthen caregiving families.

To read the report, [visit http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/info-11-2013/including-family-caregiver-assessment-in-medicare-hcbs-waiver-programs-AARP-ppi-ltc.html](http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/info-11-2013/including-family-caregiver-assessment-in-medicare-hcbs-waiver-programs-AARP-ppi-ltc.html).
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California Department of Aging posts helpful information on Facebook

California Department of Aging's newly created Facebook page features news, tips, and information to help older adults and caregivers stay healthy and informed.



The page features information on innovative programs and updates from the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Health and Human Services, and state agencies. CDA invites Facebook users to visit the page frequently for the latest postings and to hit "Like."



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