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Senators Champion Increased OAA Funding in FY15

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, was joined by 26 of his colleagues this month in calling for a significant funding increase for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. As part of the annual appropriations process, the Senators submitted their request to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the appropriations panel in charge of funding OAA programs. The Senators' letter acknowledges the need for a stronger investment in the OAA and asks appropriators to increase funding levels for these programs in order to offset years of stagnant funding and address the pressures of population growth, inflation, and sequestration.

Described in an announcement on Senator Sander's website, the letter urges the panel to provide a minimum 12 percent increase over current year OAA funding, which the letter said "would be an important step toward meeting existing demand, addressing rising costs, and responding to the growth in the number of seniors over the past decade." To learn more, visit <http://www.sanders.senate.gov/newsroom/recent-business/senators-support-seniors>

Press Release. "Senators Support Seniors Programs," website of Senator Bernie Sanders, April 4, 2014 and NASUAD Friday Update - April 11, 2014.

More patients & lower funding impact safety net care in California

Providers at California's community clinics and public hospitals are experiencing higher caseloads combined with reduced funding as the impacts of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) collide with state and federal funding cuts. According to a recent report from KQED's "State of Health," California has the nation's highest number of newly insured, yet continues to have high numbers of un-insured that rely on these safety-net providers, resulting in higher demand for patient services.

At the same time, California has shifted \$1.3 billion from county health programs to support the ACA's Medi-Cal expansion and has reduced Disproportionate Share Hospital payments which subsidize indigent care.

To read or listen to the full story, visit <http://blogs.kqed.org/stateofhealth/2014/04/16/obamacare-means-new-challenges-for-safety-net-providers-in-salinas-and-cathedral-city/#more-18684>.



Information from California Healthline, Calif. Safety-Net Providers Face Heavier Workload, Funding Cuts. Wednesday, April 16, 2014.

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.

Partners Step Up Support Of SSI Restoration Act

U.S. Senate urges support of the *Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act of 2014* (S.2089), which would update provisions in the SSI program that have not changed since 1972, such as the income exclusion and asset limits. The Act would also eliminate a rule requiring the loss of some benefits for SSI beneficiaries who also receive non-cash in-kind assistance, a provision the committee believes is “unfair to affected individuals and has proven to be enormously difficult for the Social Security Administration to administer.”

The Committee states that the bill “gives all Senators an opportunity to join in making long-overdue improvements to a program that provides vital life-saving assistance to our nation’s neediest and most vulnerable citizens.” Also, a number of individual advocates have recently written their members of Congress to support the Senate or identical House bill (H.R. 1601). There are now 60 organizational endorsees of the legislation; please e-mail info@nsclc.org if you would like your organization added to the list of endorsing organizations. To read the letter, visit www.ncpssm.org/PublicPolicy/LettersTestimony/Documents/ArticleID/1239/Letter-on-SSI-Restoration-Act-2014

Information from NSCLC “In Review” 4/17/14

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April 22, 2014

CCoA partners with CEJC, CWDA to request increased funding for Adult Protective Services in California

The California Commission on Aging (CCoA) joined with the California Elder Justice Coalition (CEJC) and the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) to sponsor a budget augmentation to increase training and statewide coordination of the Adult Protective Services (APS) program, which protects and serves seniors and dependent adults who are victims of abuse and neglect. Authored by Assemblymember Mariko Yamada, Chair of the Assembly’s Aging & Long-Term Care Committee, the \$1.4 million request was presented to the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services on April 9th. The augmentation would significantly increase training resources for APS line staff and would create an executive-level position within the Department of Social Services to oversee and coordinate statewide training and standards, develop improved and updated data reporting procedures and liaison with other branches of the state and federal government on elder justice issues.

California’s APS programs provide 24/7 emergency response to reports of abuse and neglect of elders and dependent adults, conducting in-person investigations, coordinating with local law enforcement and other agencies for investigations and links to services, and individualized case management to enable elders and dependent adults to remain safely in their homes and communities. The APS program is pivotal to the elder and dependent adult justice network, which crosses multiple systems to protect and serve victims of abuse and neglect, including law enforcement, legal aid programs, the judiciary, long-term care services, and many others.

Testifying before the Committee in support of the proposal were CEJC Chair Lisa Nerenberg, CCoA member Judge Julie Conger, CWDA Director Frank Mecca, and advocates and representatives from the APS field. The APS budget augmentation was a primary recommendation of the 2013 Elder Justice Summit, sponsored by the three organizations and C4A. The budget request has the support of more than 30 organizations; contact the Carol Sewell at the Commission on Aging to sign-on (csewell@cco.ca.gov).

Elder Justice Coalition Creates Petition to Fund President's Elder Justice Initiative

The President's \$25 million Elder Justice budget request is the focus of a new online petition created by the Elder Justice Coalition. Posted on Whitehouse.gov this week, the petition urges the Obama Administration to prioritize the President's request to fund the Elder Justice Initiative when speaking to Congress. According to Bob Blancato, Elder Justice Coalition National Coordinator, "this is one of the many actions we are taking to make sure that Elder Justice funding will be in place this year. This is a grass roots campaign and the Administration needs to hear from all Americans that Elder Justice is a priority issue." The petition will need 100,000 signatures by May 7, 2014 in order to receive a response from the President.

The President's budget proposal includes \$13.8 million dollars for Adult Protective Services, and would help create an APS National Data System and technical assistance as well as national demonstration grants to both enhance data systems and develop program standards and evaluation. It will also provide \$11.2 million for research including elder abuse screening and will establish a better knowledge base about elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. To sign the petition, visit Whitehouse.gov at <http://wh.gov/lvXWd>.

Excerpted from News from the Elder Justice Coalition, April 9, 2014.

New Telehealth Program Aims To Increase Specialist Care in Northern California

Anticipating the needs of an expanding customer base under the Affordable Care Act, Blue Shield of California has partnered with Adventist Health to improve health care access to rural parts of their service area through expansion of telehealth.

The partnership between San Francisco-based non-profit Blue Shield and the faith-based, non-profit Adventist Health links the insurer to an integrated health care delivery system with the largest rural service area in the state. At the heart of the collaboration is telehealth -- the growing practice of delivering health care services via telecommunications technology. All Blue Shield individual and family plan customers, including those who purchased coverage through Covered California, can seek specialty care not available in their areas through the telehealth network, which launched in March. Telehealth can give rural patients direct access to specialist care that otherwise could require hours of travel and expense for the patient.



Under the new program, specially trained care coordinators serve as facilitators for the new telehealth program at 25 existing Adventist clinics in Northern California, who will arrange appointments with specialists and coordinate scheduling for patients upon a doctor's referral. To read more about the new service, visit <http://www.californiahealthline.org/insight/2014/new-telehealth-program-aims-to-increase-specialist-care-in-northern-california>.

Excerpted from California Healthline, Thursday, April 3, 2014

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The Administration for Community Living hopes advocates nationwide will help to make **this year's World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)** (on or near June 15) the strongest showing of unity in action to date. ACL has posted a **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Tool Kit** for resources to help aging organizations engage your community, educate others, raise awareness about this serious problem, and empower people to take action to end elder abuse. The toolkit includes:

- WEAAD Planning Materials: Fliers, Fact sheets, and Widgets available to download and customize.
- Outreach Tools: ACL's customizable social media posts are available for use on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as a formal Press Release template.
- Sign up as an official WEAAD Collaborator and stand united as one nation against elder abuse!
- Share your event. This will allow others all over the country to log on search for events that they would like to attend or support. What an easy way to boost your event profile!

The World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Toolkit and information from the Administration for Community Living is available at <http://acl.gov/newsroom/observances/WEAAD/Tools-Tips-Resources/Index.aspx#toolkit!>



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Upcoming Events

May 5, 2014 – 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. -- Integrative Health & Wellness Programs – Exercise at Any Age. Department of Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Health Care System, 11301 Wilshire Blvd. Bld. 500 Room, 1281, Los Angeles, CA 90073 Contact: Dr. Steven Castle 310-268-3358

May 6-7, 2014 -- Triple-A Council of California, Vagabond Hotel, Sacramento. [Www.4tacc.org](http://www.4tacc.org).

June 2-3, 2014 -- California Commission on Aging, Portola Hotel, Monterey. [Www.ccoa.ca.gov](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov) for information.

June 23, 2014 -- Congress of California Seniors Aging Policy Conference, San Jose Airport Garden Hotel, San Jose. (916) 442-4474 for information.

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