



# Senior and Disability Services

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Area Agency on Aging

**DATE:** Dec. 1, 2016  
**TO:** OCWCOG SSAC/DSAC  
**FROM:** Dave Toler, Senior and Disability Services Director  
**RE:** **Senior & Disabilities (SDS) Director Updates**

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## Post-Election

I'm sure everyone knows by now that Measure 97 has been rejected by Oregon voters this past election. Recent information from DHS indicates that had Measure 97 passed, OCWCOG would very possibly have been looking at an increase of 8 staff for our Medicaid program and approximately 2-3 more staff for our Adult Protective Services unit as well. If the legislature does not land on another solution, SDS anticipates reductions, particularly in non-Medicaid services such as Oregon Project Independence.

We are hoping to invigorate our Advocacy & Issues Committee so that our older adults and younger adults with disabilities will have a strong voice in Salem this next legislative session.

## Meals on Wheels Fundraising

We have several projects going to improve our funding for this very important program. We hired a direct mailing firm to do a holiday mailer. It is too early to estimate how well this campaign is doing but interim results look promising.

In addition, we have also hired Westby Associates to assist us with building our capacity for other funding sources for this program. They are conducting one-on-one focus groups with 20-30 individuals to test our message and our mission for fundraising efforts in the future. So far, results have been positive and I look forward to providing a conclusive report on this to you in the future. Westby is also assisting with potential grants from private foundations as well as business sponsorships.

I am really hoping that our SSAC and DSAC will become more engaged in this effort. Westby will be leading a community engagement workshop with our Senior Meals Advisory Council later this month. We will consider bringing a similar workshop to the full SSAC/DSAC group in the early part of the calendar year.

## **The Forgettable Epidemic**

The rise in dementia-related diseases is occurring at an alarming rate in our nation and in our local communities. Over 62,000 Oregonians are estimated to have the disease today and that is projected to increase to 84,000 in just 9 years, a 35% increase.

What is perhaps more troubling than these numbers is the reality that we are also ill-prepared to care for these individuals and their families. The Mental Health services do not treat dementia symptoms and the physical health side is often under-trained and often considers it a mental health condition.

The lack of understanding about the disease often leads to inappropriate medical treatment, ineffective interactions with the justice system, and has left thousands of Oregonians vulnerable to financial, physical, and emotional abuse.

Public policy changes and funding priorities are much needed and SDS is advocating for such measures. It is my hope that our SSAC/DSAC will get engaged in this discussion. We will be coming to the Councils early next year seeking that engagement.

## **Marci Howard Leaving**

Marci Howard, our Albany Medicaid Program manager has tendered her resignation. Marci just wanted to spend more time with her twins before they're all grown up! We can certainly understand and wish Marci all the best, she will be missed dearly. Randi Moore has agreed to act as interim while we take a compass check on where and how our department will move forward.