



Senior and Disability Services

1400 Queen Ave SE • Suite 206 • Albany, OR 97322
(541) 967-8630 TTY/Voice • 1-800-638-0510 TTY/Voice

203 N Main St • Toledo, OR 97391
(541) 336-2289 • (541) 336-8103 TTY/Voice • (800) 282-6194



Area Agency on Aging

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 30, 2017
TO: OCWCOG Senior and Disability Services Advisory Councils
FROM: SDS Program Managers Jennifer Moore and Randi Moore
RE: **Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) Program Report**

Activities of Daily Living Rule Changes and Transition Plan for Ineligible Medicaid Consumers

Medicaid's Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program provides an array of home and community-based services, assisting Medicaid recipients with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as bathing, eating, and elimination. All Oregon consumers receiving assistance through the HCBS program have an initial assessment, and subsequent annual assessments, to determine eligibility for services.

The State of Oregon has approached the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Federal agency that oversees Medicare and Medicaid services, requesting revision in eligibility rules. *This revision would modify and adjust assistance need levels for eligibility qualification.* These changes would result in an estimated 4% of current recipients no longer being eligible for these services, or approximately 1,219 individuals statewide.

To mitigate the potential risks to individuals who may lose eligibility, the State is requesting that transition services be made available to assist affected consumers. *Specifically, these services would be available for those consumers in residential settings who may lose eligibility because of the adjustments, or individuals who are still eligible for services, but will now be receiving these services in a lower level care setting.* Transition services could include supports such as case management and financial assistance for the purchase of furniture or other household items, or providing first and last month's rent for housing.

Two major hurdles must be faced before implementation of the ADL changes can move forward:

1. CMS needs to approve the State's request to adapt eligibility rules; and
2. APD will be required to get Legislative approval to use funds for transition services.

Department of Human Services (DHS) Leadership Change

Last week DHS Director Clyde Saiki announced that he will be retiring at the end of the summer after holding the position for 18 months. Oregon Governor Kate Brown will be naming Fariborz Pakseresht as DHS Director. He will begin as interim Director on September 1, 2017 and will become the permanent Director effective upon confirmation by the Oregon Senate. The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG) feels fortunate to have strong relationships with DHS leadership, and even more specifically to be able to continue developing great

connections with the DHS Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) management team including Director Ashely Carson-Cottingham.

Older Americans Month Proclamations

Due to growing concerns over poverty levels and a lack of supportive programs, John F. Kennedy designated May of 1963 as the first Senior Citizens' Month, the precursor to what we now call *Older Americans Month*. This year, many of our Region's communities have events planned in celebration and recognition of older Americans. OCWCOG leadership is pleased to be attending meetings in many of our member jurisdictions, where proclamations have or will be read to raise awareness of *Older Americans Month*.

N4A Comments on Recent House Passage of American Health Care Act

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) released the following statement regarding the recent House passage of the American Health Care Act:

Statement by Sandy Markwood, CEO
House-Passed Health Care Bill Dangerous for Millions of Older Americans

Washington, DC— The American Health Care Act (AHCA) passed this afternoon by the House of Representatives represents a grave risk to millions of older adults, caregivers and people with disabilities, as this bill would negatively impact their access to the affordable health care and accessible long-term care they need to maintain their health and independence.

As advocates for quality long-term services and supports provided at home and in the community, as well as a range of evidence-based healthy aging programs, n4a is deeply concerned by the passage of AHCA.

The measure cuts \$839 billion from the Medicaid program, would allow insurers to significantly increase premiums based on a consumer's age, shortens the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund by four years, and eliminates a key prevention program that funds local falls prevention and chronic disease self-management efforts that are critical to preserving the health of older Americans.

The bill's recent updates to allow states to waive Essential Health Benefits and community rating rules, which put anyone with a pre-existing condition at risk of being unable to secure affordable health care, only add to our long list of concerns about the negative effects this legislation will have on older adults and all Americans.

As the health care action moves to the Senate, there will be much work ahead, but for now, we urge older adults, caregivers, people with disabilities and other consumers to raise their concerns with their Representatives who voted in favor of this bill, which will have dangerous consequences for millions of Americans.