

Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

August 2003

The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to ensure dignity and independence for Alaska's seniors and to assist them through programs and services, funded by the Commission, to lead useful and meaningful lives.



Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger is a monthly publication of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

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Alzheimer's Demonstration Project Expands in Alaska

The Alzheimer's Demonstration Project is a federal grant awarded by the Administration on Aging to explore flexible models of care and address local, regional and state needs of persons with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) and their caregivers living in isolated communities. The emphasis of the project is on outreach and education.

For the last three years the Alaska Commission Aging and Southeast Senior Services coordinated with families, communities, state agencies and local service providers to ensure that a holistic plan of care is implemented to include services based on individual needs. Referrals for the project are coordinated through medical providers, service agencies and individual and family inquiry.

The goals of the project include:

- developing and providing support services to people with ADRD and their caregivers
- providing outreach, education and training for professional and family caregivers who provide care for people with ADRD, and
- examining the full spectrum of care available to people with ADRD in rural communities and assess gaps in service and information.

Services include:

- Care coordination
- Personal Care
- Home Health
- Information and Education
- Legal services
- Other services as needed, including diagnostic evaluations

The project was originally intended to last three years and to be carried out in Southeast Alaska. The Alaska Commission on Aging has extended it through 2004 and expanded to cover all of Alaska, using \$350,000 from the Administration on Aging, Title IV, \$187,500 in matching funds from Mental Health Trust Authority Authorized Receipts for Innovative Respite and Chore, and approximately half of \$257,200 in Alzheimer's Mini-Grants.

Four agencies currently provide Innovative Respite and Chore services in the state:

- The Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency (ADRA)

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Commissioners Visit Barrow for Fall Meeting

The Alaska Commission on Aging will hold its autumn quarterly meeting in Barrow September 9-11. The Commission holds at least one of each year's quarterly meetings outside of Anchorage or Juneau. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority provides the majority of funding for these trips in order to support rural outreach. As such, much of the Commission's time will be spent meeting with Barrow's seniors and the agencies that support them in an effort to assess their needs and concerns. The Commissioners will also work on changes to the State Plan for Services and other strategic planning. Time will also be set aside for public comment in person and via teleconference.

The meetings will be held at the Chamber Room of Barrow City Hall, 2022 Ahkovak Street. For more information, please contact Lillan Bradley, 907-465-3250 or Lillan_Bradley@health.state.ak.us.

Protecting the Rights of Elders

The following article is adapted from material distributed by the U.S. Administration on Aging.

Increasingly, we are being confronted with the challenge of protecting our loved ones or ourselves as we age from the threats of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Until the Older Americans Act (OAA) was passed in 1965, most older Americans had to rely mostly on themselves and were often subject to mistreatment and unfair practices that inhibited dignity and respect for older age.

The Older Americans Act provided protection for vulnerable older adults, decreeing that older Americans were entitled to certain basic rights and benefits. The law provided for the coordination and funding of a vast network of state and area agencies on aging and local providers that would implement programs to protect the rights of older persons.

The U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) was established at the federal level within the Department of Health and Human Services in 1965 to oversee the development of the programs called for in the OAA. Today AoA's aging network includes over 29,000 national, state, local, and tribal organizations that work to keep older Americans healthy and in their homes, protect their rights, and assure their access to benefits and services. The Alaska Commission on Aging is one of those agencies.

One of the AoA's top priorities is to ensure the rights of older people and prevent their abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The agency works to heighten awareness among other federal agencies, organizations, groups, and the public about the needs of vulnerable older people.

Specific Programs to Protect Elder Rights

AoA administers the Prevent Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation program. This program specifically promotes the rights of seniors and protects them from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The program is organized and coordinated on the national level by AoA and implemented at the state and local level by members of the aging network. Activities include funding for state and local public awareness campaigns, training programs, and multidisciplinary teams.

To support and enhance these activities, AoA funds the National Center on Elder Abuse
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Alzheimer's Demonstration Projects (continued from page 1)

- Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)
- Center for Community (CfC)
- Fairbanks Resource Agency (FRA)

Each of these agencies has received Innovative Respite and Chore grants for the past five years. The project will enhance these services and require coordination of care, education, and data collection. Previous state funding was for respite and the addition of federal funding will expand services. The original goals of the project have been revised to include:

- developing and implementing wrap-around services for persons with ADRD and their caregivers throughout the state
- providing wrap around services for 50 persons with ADRD
- providing innovative respite services to 50 persons with ADRD
- providing care coordinator training for ADRD assessment
- analyzing needs of rural care coordinators in review of standards
- developing flexible models of individual in-home respite for persons with ADRD throughout the state
- promoting ADRD awareness and understanding through education and training of primary care and home and community based providers
- providing ADRD training and/or materials to home and community based providers, and
- promoting coordinated access to health and social support services for persons with ADRD and their family caregivers

The overall approach and strategy for providing services throughout Southeast Alaska during the past three years will be adapted to the other regions of the state. This successful model provides outreach and education through the Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency, the University of Alaska-Southeast in Sitka, and neuropsychologist, Dr. Cindy Westergaard. Dr. Westergaard has also been available to follow-up with dementia assessments.

In addition, Care Coordinators have provided information, assistance, counseling and support to enable families to make decisions about long term care and was enhanced during the previous three years of the project in Southeast. Care Coordination will be expanded in each region to assist caregivers in accessing the full range of long term care and health and social support services.

Services are available through grants from the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Paula Recchia, Mental Health Trust Authority Planner, is coordinating the project for the Alaska Commission on Aging. She can be reached by phone at (907) 465-4793 or via email at Paula_Recchia@health.state.ak.us.

Senior Advocacy Coalition Monthly Teleconferences

The Senior Advocacy Coalition meets by teleconference from 9:30 to 11:30 AM on the second Friday of every month to address issues affecting Alaska's seniors. The teleconference originates at the Anchorage Senior Center.

For more information on joining a meeting, contact Sue Samet, 261-4140, Brenda Brown, 338-6492, or 261-4848 in Anchorage; Fred Lau, 235-7655 in Homer; or Lisa Morley, 465-4798 in Juneau.

