

Alaskan Seniors Living Longer Growing Stronger



Frank H. Murkowski
Governor

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

June 2006



Karleen K. Jackson
Commissioner



Commission on Aging Wraps Up 2006 Legislative Efforts

Linda Gohl, Executive Director of the Alaska Commission on Aging, shares the Commission's support for Senate Bill 224, which establishes the second Wednesday of September each year as *Older Alaskans Day*. At left, Governor Frank Murkowski prepares to sign the bill into law. At right, Marie Darlin, AARP lobbyist, and Senator Gary Stevens, sponsor of the bill, wait to speak. (Governor's Media Staff photo.)

Victories for older Alaskans this legislative session included the passage of bills for Medicaid adult dental benefits, creation of an office of elder fraud and assistance, insurance coverage for colorectal cancer screening, revisions to the advance health care directives statutes, creation of an Older Alaskans' Day, and operation of low-speed vehicles such as golf carts on neighborhood roads. Advocates also were able to increase the budget base to provide for essential home care services for individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD)

which previously had been funded entirely by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

The Alaska Commission on Aging concluded its biweekly legislative teleconferences on May 11th with a review of bills of interest to seniors, with special attention to those that passed the Alaska Legislature this session. Over the course of the 2006 session, the ACOA tracked the status of over 140 bills in categories such as Medicaid, Services and Benefits; Health Care and Medical Professions; Safety and Security; Taxes and Revenue Sharing;

Employment and Retirement; and Fiscal Plan and Budget Appropriations. Nineteen of these bills of interest passed the legislature this session.

The Legislative Advocacy Committee of the Alaska Commission on Aging formulated a list of eight top legislative priorities before the start of this year's session. The top priorities included increasing the budget base for programs serving ADRD individuals; obtaining Medicaid coverage for preventive and non-emergency dental care for
(Continued on page 4.)

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

The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to advocate for policies, programs, and services that promote the dignity and independence of Alaska's seniors and help them maintain a meaningful quality of life.

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Commission Plans Aging Advocacy Conference

The Alaska Commission on Aging will hold an aging advocacy conference at the Anchorage Senior Center on June 27th and 28th, 2006. "The Future of Aging in Alaska Advocacy Conference" will present seniors, senior advocates, and care providers with information on advocacy techniques and overviews of topics such as Alaska's long-term care system, the effects of the current health care system on seniors' well-being, and other issues affecting seniors. The conference is free of charge.

The conference is part of the Alaska Commission on Aging's effort to encourage formation of a grassroots aging advocacy network comprised of seniors, their families, caregivers, agency care providers, and others interested in the well-being of Alaska's seniors. The advocacy network will form a base of activists who can be called upon to advocate for the needs and perspectives of seniors.

Space is limited to about 180 participants. Registrations are being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. To register, visit the Alaska Commission on Aging Web site at www.alaskaaging.org/events.htm or call the Commission at (907) 465-3250 to request registration materials by mail or fax. A limited number of travel

scholarships are available to assist participants from outside Anchorage with their expenses.

Among the scheduled presenters for the conference are Stephanie Vance, a legislative advocacy consultant from Washington, DC; Dr. Stephen Bezruchka, an emergency room physician and instructor at the University of Washington School of Public Health in Seattle; Steven Lutzky, a long-term care planning consultant familiar with Alaska's system of care; and Pat Luby, Advocacy Director for the AARP in Anchorage.

Lunch will be provided at the Anchorage Senior Center on both days of the conference. The Prime Time Dancers, a group of senior dancers based at the Anchorage Senior Center, will perform during one of the lunch periods.

Partial funding for the conference has been provided under the Real Choice Systems Change grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS).

Please join us to learn more about advocacy, Alaska's long-term care system, and other important senior issues — and to network with others who are interested in advocating on behalf of senior needs.

Older Workers Enjoy Their Jobs, Plan to Continue Working

The vast majority of older workers are happy holding down a job and many look forward to continued employment, new research from the Urban Institute concludes.

Ninety percent of workers age 60 to 64, or 5.4 million men and women, say they enjoy going to work; the share increases to 97 percent of workers 70 and older, or 3 million people. An individual's economic or social circumstances have little influence on his or her attitude toward working.

"Enjoying the Golden Work Years," co-authored by Barbara A. Butrica, Simone G. Schaner, and Sheila Zedlewski, is one of

three reports about older Americans posted on the Urban Institute's Web site, www.urban.org. The other two papers look at the financial rewards of working at older ages and the policy obstacles to working longer.

Forty percent of workers age 60 through 64 and 51 percent of those 65 and older say they have given little thought to retirement, the researchers found.

Labor market trends also suggest a desire to work longer. Labor force participation rates among adults age 55 and older began increasing slowly in 1986, after declining for decades, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[Seventy-thousand older workers aged 50 and older make up nearly a quarter of Alaska's total workforce.]

According to data from the 2002 Health and Retirement Study conducted for the National Institute on Aging by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center, about half of adults age 60 through 64 were working, while one-third of those age 65 through 69 and about one in ten of those past age 69 had jobs.

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and educational organization that examines the social, economic, and governance challenges facing the nation.

Myths About Older Workers

Myth: *Older workers can't or won't learn new skills.*

Reality: Those over 50 are proving their ability to learn new skills by becoming the fastest-growing group of Internet users. Also, career changers in their 40s and 50s are taking new courses to enhance their skills.

Myth: *Older workers don't stay on the job long.*

Reality: Workers between 45 and 54 stayed on the job twice as long as those 25 to 34, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1998.

Myth: *Older workers take more sick days than younger workers.*

Reality: Attendance records are actually better for older workers than for younger ones.

Myth: *Older workers aren't flexible or adaptable.*

Reality: Because they've seen many approaches fail in the workplace, they are more likely to question change. But they can accept new approaches as well as younger workers can as long as the rationale is explained.

Myth: *Older workers are more expensive.*

Reality: The costs of more vacation time and pensions are often outweighed by low turnover among older workers and the fact that higher turnover among other groups translates into recruiting, hiring, and training expenses.

Source: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-USA

2006 Legislative Report (continued from page 2)

adults; and assisting seniors and senior service providers with increased heating fuel costs. The first two objectives were achieved, with the help of other advocates for seniors and Trust beneficiaries. While no additional state funding for heating or energy assistance programs was provided, the federal government did authorize some increased funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The Legislature increased the Department of Health & Social Service budget to allow the department to spend these additional funds.

Other ACOA advocacy priorities for this year included reaching seniors in need of mental health or chemical dependency services (no new state funding was allocated for these services this year); promoting quality programs

for seniors (budget requests for new positions in Adult Protective Services, the DSDS Quality Assurance Program, and the Pioneers Homes were funded); ensuring that Medicaid funding meets demand (Medicaid was fully funded at the Department's request level); making appropriate housing available for seniors and Trust beneficiaries (the ACOA participates in the Trust housing working group); and increasing transportation services for seniors and the disabled (the ACOA collaborates with the Alaska Mobility Coalition, which did receive additional federal funds).

This year's ACOA legislative teleconferences drew a record number of host sites across the state, in communities from Nikiski and Nenana to Anchorage and Fairbanks. Most of

the host sites are senior centers and other senior services agencies. The Commission holds biweekly teleconferences during the legislative session to inform seniors and advocates of the status of pending legislation with regard to senior issues or other topics likely to be important to seniors. Individuals wishing to participate in next year's teleconferences can contact the ACOA for information on the nearest host site.

Alaska Commission on Aging members met with legislators and staff during their March quarterly meeting week in Juneau, and ACOA staff met with legislators throughout the session to advocate for ACOA priorities. The ACOA also provided letters of support for a number of bills important to seniors.

Senior Grant Program News



In preparation for the start of a new grant year, the senior grants staff in the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS) offer the following updates:

1) Continuation grants for fiscal year 2007 are being processed, with staff checking for missing documents. If required

New Grant Year Begins July 1st, 2006

information was not sent with the application, the sending agency received a notice of missing documents. DSDS encourages providers to send in requested materials as soon as possible to assure a timely first advance for fiscal year 2007. (Those service providers who received 3-year grants last year are eligible for continuation grants this year. The three-year grant cycle requires only one application, reducing the amount of time and paperwork involved. Fiscal

year 2007 is the second year in the current 3-year grant cycle.)

2) All grantee agencies are required to use the SAMS (Social Assistance Management System) database to report data details such as the number of meals served or other services provided, number of clients, and information about consumers receiving registered services. Registered services include home-delivered

(Continued on page 8.)

Director's Voice



As this newsletter will inform you, the Commission has been very busy for the past six months. Activities included developing and implementing an advocacy plan for the 2006 Session, holding biweekly legislative teleconferences, planning and holding a March Commission meeting in Juneau, participating in other planning efforts with the Mental Health Trust Authority, the Geriatric Education Centers, and the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, forming a steering committee to work on developing a new State Plan as required by the U.S. Administration on Aging, planning the Future of Aging in Alaska Advocacy Conference to be held June 27-28, 2006 and a Commission meeting June 29-30 in Anchorage, and hiring new planning staff.

Many of you are aware that I am planning to retire from the State of Alaska effective August 1, 2006; therefore, the Commission is recruiting to hire a new Executive Director. I have enjoyed working for the

Commission on Aging and on behalf of seniors, caregivers and the organizations that provide the vital services for older Alaskans.

Over the past four years, I have seen a growing interest in senior issues from the public and private sectors. The Commission will continue to cultivate new partnerships so we may work together to improve the quality of life for seniors. This effort, however, will require that the State of Alaska develop a statewide strategic plan for long-term care.

It is crucial to the future of seniors/elders, family members, aging baby boomers, and all Alaskans that the State of Alaska begins the work required to develop a long term care strategic plan. Alaska has the second fastest growing population of seniors and the largest segment of baby boomers in the U.S. This plan should encompass an overview of our current system of care to include housing, transportation, the underserved populations and geographic areas, barriers to receiving services, funding sources, and identifying what resources could be made available.

For a five-, ten- or fifteen-year plan to be useful, many public and private organizations must agree to work together in the best interests of the people they represent or serve. The initial planning work could begin if the following organizations will work together in a spirit of cooperation: the Administration (Department of Health and Social Services), the Legislature, the Commission on Aging, the Governor's Council on Disabilities, the Mental Health Board and the Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, healthcare organizations, and many other organizations. Others should also be included in the planning process as a resource and serve as experts, such as seniors, caregivers, providers and others. It is imperative that the appropriate leaders come together to begin this very important work as soon as possible.

I thank the Commission on Aging and the State for allowing me to serve the people of Alaska. I look forward to working as an advocate on behalf of older Alaskans.

ACOA Seeks Applicants for Commission Vacancy

A vacancy exists on the Alaska Commission on Aging for an Alaskan of any age with an interest in senior issues. Those interested in serving should submit an application or letter of interest to the Office of the Governor through the Boards & Commissions Web site at gov.state.ak.us/boards/, or by mail to Office of the Governor, Boards & Commissions, P.O. Box 110001, Juneau, AK 99811-0001.

Consumer News



The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has released a study that

shows reverse mortgages can be used by 13 million Americans to help pay for long-term care expenses at home, allowing many to remain independent and in their homes longer.

Reverse mortgages are loans that allow homeowners age 62 and over to convert home equity into cash while living at home for as long as they want. Borrowers continue to own their homes, and do not need to make any monthly payments. Instead, they can choose to receive the funds as a lump sum, line of credit, or as monthly payments (for up to life). The loan comes due only when the last borrower moves out, dies, or sells the home.

Reverse Mortgages Can Help Seniors Pay for Home Care

According to the study, there are some 9.8 million elder households (aged 62 and older) that are dealing with an impairment that can make it hard to live at home. In total, these households could access as much as \$695 billion through reverse mortgages. For individuals, the extra cash could go a long way to help with family caregiving and other long-term care expenses. For example, a borrower aged 75 years old with a home worth \$100,000 could receive a reverse mortgage loan that could pay them \$500 a month for almost 12 years.

“This is an important study that, for the first time, shows that elderly homeowners, many with chronic conditions, can use reverse mortgages to pay for care at home,” said Jim Knickman, vice president for research at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “We hope that these findings will prompt new thinking into

how the nation addresses the challenge of financing long-term care.”

“The study shows that reverse mortgages have significant potential to help many seniors pay for help at home or to make home modifications,” said NCOA president and CEO James Firman. “It also points to the need for strong consumer safeguards and lower transaction costs if these loans are to appeal to the millions of older Americans who could potentially benefit,” he noted.

According to Firman, NCOA will continue to play a leadership role in promoting the appropriate use of reverse mortgages to help pay for long-term care at home. The entire “Use Your Home to Stay at Home” report may be viewed at www.ncoa.org/attachments/ReverseMortgageReport3%2Epdf.

Info Bytes and Web Sites



People age 55 and over with 20 minutes to spare can respond to a short questionnaire online to discover private or

Find Help with Online BenefitsCheckup®

government programs that may help them pay for prescription drugs, health care, utilities, meals, and other needs. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) sponsors the service, which includes both a comprehensive benefits check-up and a prescription drug checkup. These will help determine if the person

is eligible for the Extra Help available for seniors with limited income and resources through Medicare Part D. The latter service allows eligible seniors to enroll online. The BenefitsCheckUp® service is free for personal use. To find out about programs for which you may be eligible, visit www.benefitscheckup.org.

Health News



A recent study reported in *Neurology* magazine examined the

relationship between participation in and duration of various leisure activities and the risk for cognitive decline. A group of researchers from China, led by John Y.J. Wang, followed more than 5,000 people aged 55 and older who lived in nine randomly selected Chinese communities.

The study tested participants' thinking abilities and identified their education, occupation, health habits, medical conditions, and medication use. Participants listed their leisure activities, including the nature of

Choice of Leisure Activities May Impact Cognitive Decline

the activity and how long they engaged in it. Leisure activities were classified as cognitive (such as reading, playing board games, writing, painting, playing music, watching TV), physical (such as walking, fishing, gardening), or social (such as visiting friends, or traveling).

The study followed the group for five years, repeating the original tests each year. Over the course of the study, 11 percent of the people showed a drop in their thinking abilities. In general, these people were more often women, had less education, had worked in a blue collar occupation, were currently smoking and drinking, were older, had more medical conditions, had started off with lower cognitive scores, and had less independence in performing activities of daily

living (ADLs). Other than smoking and drinking, these factors generally could not be changed.

However, the study also found that those who read and played board games showed a reduced risk of developing cognitive impairment. Watching television was associated with an increased risk of developing cognitive impairment. Neither physical nor social leisure activities were associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline.

The authors of the study speculate that activities that provide mental stimulation have a protective effect, but that watching television is too passive an activity to counterbalance the effects of aging.

Fish Eaters Stay Sharper with Age

Eating fish at least once a week is good for the brain, slowing age-related mental decline by the equivalent of three to four years, a study suggests.

The research adds to growing evidence that a fish-rich diet helps keep the mind sharp. Previous studies found that people who ate fish lowered their risk of Alzheimer's disease and stroke. Fish such as salmon and tuna that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids also have been shown to

prevent heart disease.

"We found that people who ate one fish meal per week had a 10 percent slower annual decline in thinking," said co-author Martha Claire Morris, an epidemiologist at Rush University Medical Center. "Those who ate two fish meals a week showed a 13 percent slower annual decline."

The researchers looked for, but failed to find, a link between omega-3 fatty acids

themselves and protection from brain decline. Previous studies found such a link.

Morris said it is possible that something else about eating fish worked to keep people's minds sharp. Or the food questionnaire might have been too broad to allow researchers to estimate omega-3 intakes accurately, said another researcher who was not involved in the current study.

(Section continued on page 8.)

Health News (continued from page 7).

Depression Increases Risk for Nursing Home Admission

Consistent feelings of sadness or depression may predict later nursing home admission among seniors, study findings show.

“Even after taking into account physical health and functional status, people with unmanaged depression are much more likely to be admitted to a nursing home,” study author Dr. Yael Harris of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Baltimore told Reuters Health.

This suggests “appropriate identification and management of depression could prevent or postpone the use of nursing home services,” she added.

Previous researchers have linked depression with greater likelihood of illness, death, and increased use of various service resources, and investigations conducted in nursing homes have revealed that many residents — as many as 60 percent of otherwise mentally healthy seniors in one study — have depression or experience symptoms of the condition. Yet little research has

explored the relationship between depression symptoms in the elderly and their risk of entering a nursing home.

Survey participants, including more than 141,000 community-dwelling seniors who were able to personally respond to the questions, were followed for a 3.5-year period. A total of 13,261 respondents said they had “felt sad or depressed much of the time” during the past year of the survey. By the end of the study period, 13 percent of this group had been admitted to a nursing home, Harris reported in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Diabetes and heart failure were the most strongly associated with subsequent nursing home admission, but depressive symptoms were the third greatest predictor, surpassing other chronic health conditions like cancer and arthritis, study findings indicate.

The relationship between depression and nursing home entry may be due

to depression’s effect on disease states and lifestyles, the researchers speculate. Studies have shown that depressed individuals may have higher levels of certain risk factors for high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, for example, while other studies have linked depression to increased alcohol drinking and poor diets.

On the other hand, depressive symptoms may simply be a marker for another condition, such as early Alzheimer’s disease, as has been found in previous studies, Harris notes.

“Only once physicians take depression seriously and begin monitoring for it like they do for blood pressure and weight gain will we begin to tackle this problem, which affects so many seniors and is associated with so many adverse outcomes,” Hall stated. “The key is to identify if someone is feeling sad immediately so that these feelings can be addressed in a timely manner.”

Senior Grant Program News (continued from page 4).

New Grant Year (continued)

meals, congregate meals, homemaker services, assisted transportation, nutrition counseling, and individual health services. These

services require entry of a summary client profile — age, gender, race, ethnicity, whether rural or low income, and in some cases details on

the client’s Activities of Daily Living (ADLs).

(Section concluded on page 11.)

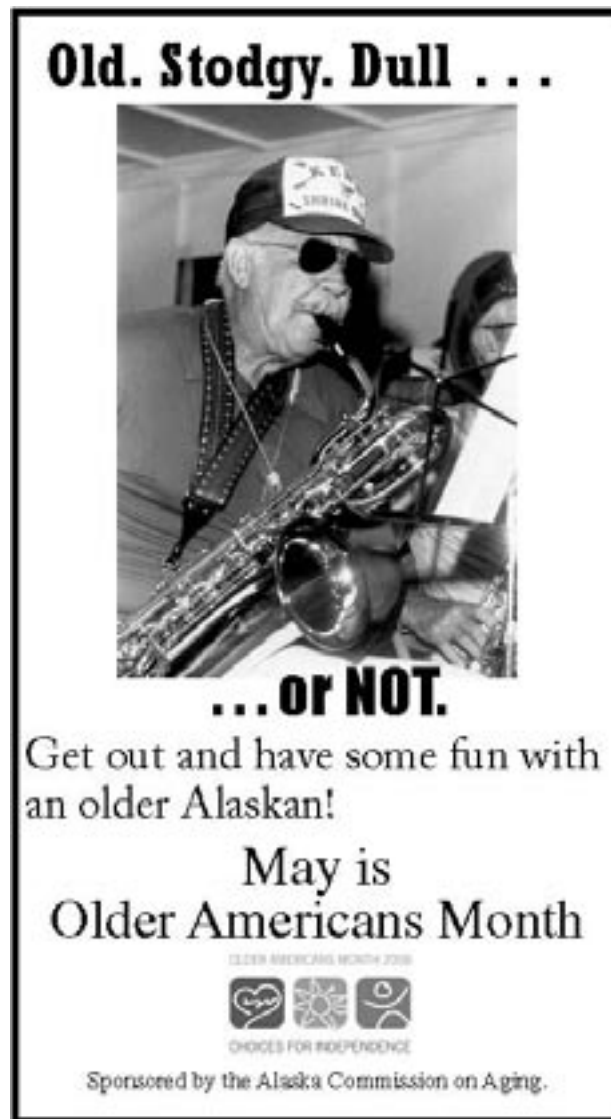
Older Americans Month Ads Highlight Senior Contributions

During May 2006, the Alaska Commission on Aging celebrated Older Americans Month with a statewide ad campaign featuring a number of sentiments Commission staff heard frequently during ACOA's community forums last year. U.S. Administration on Aging and other participants in the national aging network celebrate Older Americans Month every May.

"Seniors are an untapped resource for work and life experience. Ask a senior to teach you a new skill," read one ad, affirming that seniors do not wish to be viewed as needy consumers of services, but rather as knowledgeable individuals who stand ready to contribute to their families and communities.

"Seniors have fascinating stories. Listen, and learn history from someone who actually lived it." This ad drew attention to the sometimes overlooked fact that the seniors in our midst have a rich store of memories which can help all of us make sense of the world we live in.

"Older Alaskans are the core of our communities. Ask an Elder to share traditions and cultural wisdom with your family." This ad featured a Native elder teaching a



Old. Stodgy. Dull . . .




... or NOT.

Get out and have some fun with an older Alaskan!

May is
Older Americans Month

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH 2006



CHOICES FOR INDEPENDENCE

Sponsored by the Alaska Commission on Aging.

youngster to dry salmon, highlighting the fact that Native elders' knowledge of subsistence techniques, natural life cycles, and time-tested traditional ways are a tremendous resource for Alaskans.

"Share today's technology across the generations — teach an older Alaskan new computer skills," captured a suggestion the Commission has heard time and again — to bring seniors and youths together in activities that can benefit both, encouraging young people to teach seniors

about computers or other current technology, perhaps trading technical knowledge for a senior's tutoring in traditional school subjects such as English, math, and history.

Finally, an ad encouraging readers to "Get out and have some fun with an older Alaskan!" drew on the desire of seniors to participate in the life of the community, including celebrations of all kinds. Many vibrant, fun-loving seniors have told us they are appalled at the all-too-common representation of seniors in advertising as ailing, dependent, needy, and ready to be institutionalized, when instead most seniors are in good health, use no services, and thrive on sharing their views and talents with others in their communities.

These ads ran in a number of Alaskan newspapers, in communities both large and small. Commission staff and Department of Health and Social Services publications specialist Mark Zeiger designed and created the ads at no additional cost to the Commission on Aging. The ads may be viewed on the Commission's Web site at www.alaskaaging.org/olderamericansmonth.htm.

Project Updates



The Alaska Commission on Aging has begun developing a new State Plan for Senior Services. The four-year plan, to cover the period from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2011, will provide guidance for the use of Alaska's share of federal Older Americans Act funding and other funding for senior services. It will identify the services to be funded as well as the percentage of funding allocated to each of the state's regions. The Division of Senior and Disabilities Services will administer grants to community and statewide agencies for the services directed by the plan.

Planning Process Underway for New Senior Services Plan

The ACOA recently received new guidance from the Administration on Aging specifying required plan contents. Plans are to address four program goals: to increase the number of older people with access to an integrated array of health and social supports; to increase the number of older people who stay active and healthy; to increase the number of families who are supported in their efforts to care for their loved ones at home and in the community; and to increase the number of older people who benefit from programs that protect their rights and prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. States are also asked to address their role in providing more choices for high-risk individuals, and to address the implementation of evidence-based health promotion and disease

prevention programs. The plan must also address the State's Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Adult Protective Services programs.

A small advisory committee consisting of ACOA, DSDS, Public Health, and Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development staff, ACOA board members, and a representative of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is providing guidance on the creation of the new plan, which will be written by ACOA staff. Public input will be sought when each draft of the plan is complete. The first draft is expected to be ready for public review by sometime this fall.

Release of Economic Study Delayed

A study of the economic status of Alaskan seniors, for which the Alaska Commission on Aging contracted with the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage, has not yet been released to the public. The information will likely be made available to the public sometime this summer.

Dr. Scott Goldsmith, ISER economist, gave a slide show presentation on a section of the report to the Alaska Commission on Aging at its March 2006 meeting in Juneau. The information presented was very comprehensive and well received. The Commission has gotten numerous inquiries on the status of the report,

which was planned as an update to an ACOA-funded report on seniors' economic conditions that was published in 2000.

Please watch the ACOA Web site for updates on this project.

Events Calendar



Promoting Best Practices in Elder Health and Long-Term Supports, a statewide education, training and networking opportunity, will be held at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage on **June 8, 9, and 10, 2006**. The conference will provide continuing education for medical and social service professionals, direct care providers, and administrators of programs providing long-term supports to persons with disabilities of all ages, as well as for those who provide services which promote the health and well-being of aging persons. Sponsored by the Alaska Geriatric Education Center, the conference aims to demonstrate best practices and

report findings from research and observations about long-term supports for people of all ages. For more details, visit www.alaskagec.org/bestpractice/.

The Future of Aging in Alaska: an Aging Advocacy Conference will be held at the Anchorage Senior Center on **June 27th and 28th, 2006**. Sponsored by the Alaska Commission on Aging, the conference is aimed at seniors and others interested in developing their skills in advocating for the needs of older Alaskans. This free conference, which includes two lunches, is open to all those interested on a first-come, first-served basis. To view the preliminary agenda and to register, go to the Alaska Commission on Aging's conference website, www.alaskaaging.org/events.htm. A limited number of travel scholarships are also available for people attending from outside Anchorage.

Quarterly Meeting of the Alaska Commission on Aging on June 29th, 2006 at the Anchorage Senior Center. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. and is open to the public. The Commission will elect new officers at this meeting. A complete agenda will be posted at www.alaskaaging.org.

Quarterly Meeting of the Alaska Commission on Aging on September 26th, 27th, and 28th in Ketchikan, at a location yet to be determined. This meeting is the ACOA's annual rural outreach meeting, where members and staff visit senior centers and other service providers at communities in the area. Watch our Web site at www.alaskaaging.org for future details.

Senior Grant Program News (continued from page 8).

'06 Grant Year Ends June 30th, 2006

DSDS requires all providers to have all their fiscal year 2006 final reports submitted

and SAMS data entered by July 31, 2006. The final five percent of the 2006 grant

payments will be held pending completion of reports and SAMS data entry.

Nutrient Analysis of Senior Meal Programs to Begin

Joan Gone, coordinator of the Nutrition, Transportation, and Support Services (NTS) grants, will contact meal providers to gather information for nutrient analysis of providers' menus. Joan is a Registered Dietician. Nutrient analysis ensures that home-delivered

meals as well as congregate meals provided in senior centers provide a minimum of 33-1/3% of the USDA daily-recommended dietary allowances per meal.

Joan will schedule regional teleconferences with meal providers to review what

needs to be submitted for the analysis. Providers will choose one week (or 5 days) of menus to be analyzed. Those providers who have had a nutritional analysis conducted recently are asked to please submit the report to Joan.

NCOA Urges Funding Increase for OAA Programs

Federal Notes



The National Council on Aging (NCOA) urges the public to help

advocate for at least a ten percent funding increase in the 2007 Congressional appropriations for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs.

OAA funding has been frozen since 2002. Inflation

and the growing numbers of seniors in need have eroded purchasing power, forcing cuts in critical senior services. Rising gas prices have hit OAA programs like Meals-on-Wheels and supportive services hard.

NCOA suggests that concerned constituents contact their U.S. Representatives and Senators, reminding them that OAA programs preserve seniors' health and independence and save tax dollars in the long run by reducing premature

nursing home placements and averting malnutrition.

NCOA suggests emails, faxes or phone calls to members of Congress. Phone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses of U.S. House and Senate members can be found at www.visi.com/juan/congress/, or people can obtain contact information from their local Legislative Information Offices.

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