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## Top Stories

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### **President Obama Issues Proclamation on the Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

On July 24 President Obama issued a proclamation to celebrate the 19th anniversary of the enactment of the historic Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law on July 26, 1990.

To read the entire proclamation go to

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Presidential-Proclamation-19th-anniversary-of-the-Americans-with-Disabilities-Act/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Presidential-Proclamation-19th-anniversary-of-the-Americans-with-Disabilities-Act/)

### **The Obama Administration Calls on Nation to Begin Planning and Preparing for Fall Flu Season & the New H1N1 Virus**

The Obama Administration has sent a strong message to the nation: **Now is time to start planning and preparing for the fall flu season and the ongoing H1N1 flu outbreak.** In addition, the federal government is prepared to commit resources, training, and new tools to help state and local governments and America's families get ready.

White House Homeland Security Advisor John Brennan, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan joined with delegations from 54 states, tribes and territories on July 9 at the H1N1 Influenza Preparedness Summit at the National Institutes of Health to kick-off the government's nation-wide fall flu preparedness efforts. Assistant Secretary Greenlee represented the Administration on Aging at the Summit.

Throughout the one-day summit, Administration officials laid out specific ways that states and local governments could start their planning and preparation efforts and announced new programs and resources to help state and local governments, the medical community and every day America prepare for H1N1 and the fall flu season. For more information on the steps that are being taken, please visit the federal government's new Web site <http://www.flu.gov>. This one-stop comprehensive site brings together flu-related information from across HHS and other federal agencies. The expanded site builds on the pandemic planning information long presented on <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>, and incorporates information about the novel H1N1 flu as well as the seasonal flu.

HHS has launched a new PSA campaign contest to encourage more Americans to get involved in the nation's flu preparedness efforts by making a 15-second

or 30-second PSA. Officials at the summit stressed the idea of "shared responsibility" when it comes to combating the flu and the goal of the new HHS PSA campaign contest is to tap into the nation's creativity to help educate Americans about how to plan for and prevent the spread of H1NI influenza. HHS will evaluate submissions and will present the best PSAs back to the public so everyone can vote on their favorite submission. The winning PSA will receive \$2,500 in cash and will appear on national television. Contest details as well more information about the larger effort to plan and prepare for the flu season are available at <http://www.flu.gov>. **Deadline for submissions is August 17, 2009.**

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## **AoA News**

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### **U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee Addresses National Aging Community at n4a Conference**

Assistant Secretary Greenlee gave her first major address to the National Aging Services Network at the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Tradeshow of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) on July 21 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. During her remarks, she outlined her vision for how the country and communities must work together to help our older population and individuals with disabilities to age at home for as long as possible. In addition to her keynote remarks, Greenlee met with n4a members, participated in the Innovations and Achievement Award Ceremony and visited Park ElderCenter, an innovative local Minneapolis senior site serving ethnic and minority elders. Assistant Secretary Greenlee was joined by CMS Center for Medicare Management Director Jonathan Blum at the Conference. AoA and CMS, together with n4a, also announced the awardees of the Generational Community pilot programs launching a nationwide campaign to raise awareness across the country for planning appropriate healthcare and long term care options. To hear Assistant Secretary Greenlee's remarks, please visit the video at: <http://www.aoa.gov/>

### **Assistant Secretary for Aging Issues Statement on the 19<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities**

Sunday, July 26, 2009 marked the 19<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was created to give individuals' equal opportunity, full participation in society, the opportunity to live independently and acquire economic self sufficiency. President Obama issued a proclamation acknowledging the progress that has been made to give individuals with disabilities greater access to community living. Earlier this summer, President Obama and HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius proclaimed 2009 as the "Year of Community Living," in acknowledgement of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the historic *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision. This landmark ruling supported community living

options for people with disabilities to ensure there is no discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In recognition of these significant observations, AoA would like to shine a spotlight on the work of our national network of community-based aging organizations who each day provide critical services to older Americans, individuals with disabilities and their families to help them remain independent.

One important way the network serves these populations is through Aging and Disability Resource Centers. ADRCs provide “one-stop shop” sources of information, one-on-one counseling, and streamlined access to programs and services that can enable people to remain in their own homes and communities. They are part of a nationwide effort to restructure and rebalance long-term services and supports for older adults and younger persons with disabilities and complement other programs and activities that enhance community living. ADRCs are a joint initiative of AoA and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which currently operate in 47 states and territories and will soon be expanded to every state. This initiative represents a strong partnership between the aging and disability community who work together to promote community living for people of all ages.

There are many success stories about how ADRCs across the country have helped older Americans and individuals with disabilities to maintain their independence in the community. In New Hampshire, for example, the ADRC (ServiceLink) provided assistance to an elderly couple living together - George and Mary. George is 93 years old and is generally independent; Mary was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and needs increasing additional care. At the time the couple was not receiving services at the home. George’s family preferred for him to move into an assisted living facility; however George wanted to stay at home with Mary for as long as possible. The ServiceLink Resource Center, who was contacted by George’s family for assistance and direction, conducted an assessment of both George and Mary identifying their needs, preferences and appropriate and eligible services and resources. A ServiceLink staff talked to them about HCBS (Medicaid program) services and guided them through the application and eligibility determination process. ServiceLink was also able to identify the Caregiver Network as a useful network for helping George care for Mary, create a medication plan for her and arrange for a housekeeper to come by occasionally to clean. Additionally a ServiceLink case manager was assigned to the couple for occasional follow up and a reassessment of needs. Ultimately George and Mary were able remain living at home. This is a story with a happy ending. You can learn more about ADRCs visiting: <http://www.adrc-tae.org/tiki-index.php?page=HomePage>

The Administration on Aging joins President Obama in celebrating the progress our country has made in this important area and salutes all those who work to

help older persons and individuals with disabilities of all ages to remain independent in their communities as they age.

### **ASA Greenlee Stresses Importance of Support for Family Caregivers in Interview with *Today's Caregiver Magazine***

Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee was interviewed for *Today's Caregiver Magazine* just a few days after being confirmed for her new position as head of the U.S. Administration on Aging. Assistant Secretary Greenlee has identified the support for family caregivers as one of her top priorities for AoA. You can listen to her interview at:

[http://www.caregiver.com/editorials/good\\_news\\_express.htm](http://www.caregiver.com/editorials/good_news_express.htm)

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### **Other HHS News**

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#### **AHRQ Launches Health Advice Column in Spanish**

HHS' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has extended its outreach to the Spanish-speaking consumers with the launch of *Consejos de Salud Para Tí*, (*Health Advice for You*), a new monthly online health advice column. The column provides evidence-based tips on preventive health, safe and appropriate use of medications and other medical therapies, ways to get better health care, and other key health care issues.

According to AHRQ's 2008 *National Healthcare Disparities Report*, the quality of health care is slowly improving for the nation as a whole but is getting worse for most Hispanics, especially those with limited English proficiency. AHRQ data show that Hispanics are 38 percent less likely than non-Hispanics to have visited the doctor within the past year. In addition, more than a quarter of Hispanic adults have never had their cholesterol checked, two-thirds of Hispanics over 50 have never had a colonoscopy and more than half of Hispanic women over 40 have not had a mammogram within the last year.

“One factor contributing to why Hispanics have poorer health care than other groups is their lack of access to unbiased, culturally competent information in Spanish,” said AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., who added “*Consejos de Salud Para Tí*” will give Spanish speakers the information they need to be more informed about their health care.”

To learn more about *Consejos de Salud Para Tí*, which is part of AHRQ's *Información en Español* website, go to

<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/espanoix.htm>

#### **New CDC Report Details Health Characteristics of Adults Aged 55 Years and Older**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) July 8<sup>th</sup> National Health Statistics Report, titled *Health Characteristics of Adults Aged 55 Years and over: United States–2007*, evaluates the quality of life of older Americans. Using data from the 2004 through 2007 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), this report highlights selected health characteristics of four age groups of older adults—55–64 years, 65–74 years, 75–84 years, and 85 years and over. The data are presented for each of these age groups by sex, race, including Hispanic origin, and by poverty, health insurance, and marital status.

The study findings indicate that the variations in health were noted for each age group, with the most consistent and striking results found for poverty status and health insurance coverage. Poor adults, near poor adults, and adults with Medicaid were the most disadvantaged in terms of health status, physical and social functioning, health care utilization, and health behaviors. Also included among the findings were: the prevalence rates for fair or poor health status, selected chronic health conditions, difficulties with physical or social impairments, health care access and utilization, and health behaviors such as healthy weight, never having smoked, and currently being a nonsmoker, generally increased with advancing age and the prevalence of leisure-time physical activity and sleeping seven to eight hours decreased with age.

To read the entire report, go to  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr016.pdf>

### **New Publication on Health Care Cost Is Available Free to the Public**

The National Cancer Institute (NCI), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are pleased to announce the publication of *Health Care Costing: Data, Methods, Future Directions*.

The book takes a careful look at diverse methodological issues related to health care costs. Written by experts in health economics, epidemiology, health services research, and biostatistics, the included papers discuss ways to improve and apply health care cost estimation methods and promote research in this area.

For more information on the publication or to obtain a free copy, go to  
<http://healthservices.cancer.gov/publications/costing.html>

### **Heat Stress in the Elderly**

Elderly people, aged 65 years and older, are more prone to heat-related illnesses, including stroke, than younger people for several reasons. Elderly

people do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature, they are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that upsets normal body responses to heat, and they are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature or that inhibit perspiration.

The good news is there are preventive steps seniors can take to protect themselves from heat-related stress. During extremely hot days, seniors should get plenty of rest, wear lightweight clothing, stay inside in an air conditioned environment, and drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages (but avoid extremely cold liquids because they can cause cramps).

To learn more tips on preventing heat-related illnesses and the warning signs of heat-related illnesses, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Emergency Preparedness and Response website at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/elderlyheat.asp>

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## **Federal Funding Opportunities**

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### **Grant Applications Now Available for the 2010 Healthy Vision Community Awards Program**

The National Eye Institute (NEI) will fund up to \$10,000.00 to programs that support the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives and the Healthy People 2010 goals to reduce health disparities and improve quality of life. The focus of each program must be eye health education.

The 2010 HVCA funds are not intended for research projects or to provide direct medical care. Nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply, including community-based organizations and agencies, minority-based organizations, schools, faith-based organizations, civic and fraternal groups, community clinics, local Agencies on Aging, and state and local health departments and agencies. Universities and university affiliations, such as medical centers and schools of optometry and ophthalmology, are precluded from receiving an award directly, but are welcome to collaborate with eligible groups, such as community-based organizations

All applications must be postmarked by **Monday, August 31, 2009**. Awards will be announced in March 2010. Application forms and program information are available at <http://www.healthyvision2010.org/news/hvca/>

If you have questions about the application package or eligibility requirements, please e-mail your questions or requests to [HVCAMail@shs.net](mailto:HVCAMail@shs.net)

To find program ideas or to search for programs that have been funded in your state, visit [the Healthy Vision Community Programs Database](#)

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## **More Aging News**

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### **Disability.gov Uses New Social Media to Connect the Disabled Community with Information and Opportunities**

The U.S. Department of Labor has re-named and re-launched Disability.gov (formerly DisabilityInfo.gov) in conjunction with the 19th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Disability.gov is an award-winning federal Website that contains disability-related resources on programs, services, laws and regulations to help people with disabilities lead full, independent lives. With just a few clicks, visitors can find critical information on a variety of topics, including benefits, civil rights, community life, education, emergency preparedness, employment, housing, health, technology and transportation.

The site was revamped with social media tools to encourage interaction and feedback, and new ways to organize, share and receive information. Visitors can sign up for personalized news and updates, participate in online discussions and suggest resources for the site. New features include a Twitter feed, Really Simple Syndication feeds, a blog, social bookmarking, and a user-friendly way to obtain answers to questions on such topics as finding employment and job accommodations. “Far more than just a directory of federal resources, Disability.gov is a meeting ground for Americans to learn, respond and communicate about a wealth of critically important disability-related topics,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, who added “The new site has been vastly enhanced to provide more information in as efficient and interactive setting as possible.”

To learn more about the site, go to <http://www.disability.gov>

### **Medicare Basics: A Guide for Families & Friends of People with Medicare**

Published last month, *Medicare Basics: A Guide for Families & Friends of People with Medicare*, is a useful tool for persons unfamiliar with Medicare or the other resources that are available for the person in need of care. It can also be helpful to those who just want to brush up on what they already know.

To access the entire book, go to [http://www.disability.gov/health/health\\_insurance/medicare](http://www.disability.gov/health/health_insurance/medicare)

### **Preparedness Publications Available from FEMA**



Disasters disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property. To help communities, families, and individuals get informed, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers free publications designed to provide assistance in planning and preparing for disasters.

To learn more about the publication titles and to request copies, go to <http://www.fema.gov>

### **The National Council on Disability Seeks Public Input for Its Next Annual Report to the President and Congress**

The National Council on Disability (NCD) is gathering public input for a study of emerging issues and trends affecting the lives of people with disabilities. Information gathered will be used in the development of NCD's next annual progress report to the President and Congress, "*National Disability Policy: A Progress Report*," which is required by Section 401(b) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The purpose of this public consultation is to gather input to inform NCD's assessment of the status of the nation in achieving policies that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities, and empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society.

Input is needed on a range of quality of life areas and issues, and it will be used in the development of recommendations including, but not limited to, recommendations for changes in legislation, regulations, policies, or programs, as appropriate. NCD seeks input from individuals with disabilities, organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities, and agencies interested in or serving individuals with disabilities.

### **The deadline for submitting input is September 15, 2009.**

For more information on the issue topics, guidance on responding and how to submit your input, please go to <http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2009/NationalCouncilonDisability.doc>

### **Defined Benefits Pension Plans Are a Source of Security for Retired Households during Today's Economic Uncertainty**

Results of a recent study by the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) show that members of retired households receiving Defined Benefits (DB) Pension payments feel a greater source of security than retirees with a different pension plan.

As defined by the Department of Labor, typically a defined benefit plan promises a specified monthly benefit at retirement. The plan may state this promised benefit as an exact dollar amount, such as \$100 per month at retirement. Or, more commonly, it may calculate a benefit through a plan formula that considers such factors as salary and service — for example, 1 percent of average salary for the last 5 years of employment for every year of service with an employer. The benefits in most traditional defined benefit plans are protected, within certain limitations, by federal insurance provided through the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC).

The report, authored by Frank Porell, Professor of Gerontology, John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston and NIRS Executive Director Beth Almeida, indicates that the predictable monthly benefits provided by DB plans remain a source of security to retired households, enabling millions of Americans to remain secure and independent in old age. This study analyzed the contribution of DB pensions to the economic security of older American households. Findings indicated that DB pension income plays a vital role in reducing the risk of poverty and material hardships among older Americans. Rates of poverty among older households without DB pension income were approximately six times greater than the rate among older households with DB pension income.

To read the complete report, go to

[http://www.nirsonline.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=48](http://www.nirsonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=48)

For more information on the National Institute on Retirement Security visit:

<http://www.nirsonline.org/>

### **AAASeniors.com Provides Tools for Senior Drivers to Assess Their Driving Skills**

AAASeniors.com, launched in June of this year, is a senior safety and mobility Web site of the American Automobile Association. It includes content and resources based on extensive research, provides families of older drivers with valuable information related to senior mobility challenges and tools to help extend safe driving.

It also offers assistance in difficult discussions about transitioning from driver to passenger, according to the news release. “According to our research, many adult children of older drivers – the ‘sandwich’ boomers – are unaware that resources exist to effectively address the safety and mobility challenges of senior drivers,” said AAA Vice President of Public Affairs Kathleen Marvaso.

“AAASeniors.com gives seniors and their families the tools necessary to create an action plan to help seniors manage the inevitable consequences of aging,

continue to drive safely or transition to alternative modes of transportation, and remain independent.”

To learn more go to <http://www.aaaseniors.com/>

### **Family Reunion--a Good Time for Family Planning**

Summertime brings a lot of family time. With family reunions, picnics, weddings and other events, long distant family members travel to gather together. It is also the perfect time to do some planning for the future. With parents aging and their health and lifestyles changing, children need to discuss some changes and decisions that will be needed in the near future. Parents should take the time to tell their children where important documents are kept and what their wishes are in the event of needing health care directives or experiencing long term care needs.

For more information on long-term care planning, visit the HHS website, [http://www.longtermcare.gov/LTC/Main\\_Site/index.aspx](http://www.longtermcare.gov/LTC/Main_Site/index.aspx) and the National Care Planning Council website, <http://www.longtermcarelink.net/>

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### **Submit a Story!**

Do you have a story about ....Click on the link below to share your story with us, and it may appear on our website or in this enewsletter!

[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press\\_Room/For\\_The\\_Press/medadv/Share\\_Story.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/For_The_Press/medadv/Share_Story.aspx)

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### **Conferences**

Stay up to date with the latest aging meetings and conferences by visiting the AoA events calendar at:

[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press\\_Room/events/events\\_List\\_Day.aspx#title](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/events/events_List_Day.aspx#title)

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