



An independent, nonpartisan office of the Connecticut General Assembly

NEWS

Contact:

Rob Norton

(860) 240-5202

Robert.norton@cga.ct.gov

Sept. 15, 2009

Hartford Resident, State NASW Board President Named To Connecticut Commission on Aging by Senator Looney

HARTFORD—City resident Sherry A. Ostrout, president of the board of directors of the 3,400-member National Association of Social Workers (NASW)/Connecticut Chapter, has been appointed to a four-year term on the 17-member citizen board of the Connecticut Commission on Aging by state Senate Majority Leader Martin M. Looney (D-11th).

The state NASW chapter is the largest organization of social workers in Connecticut. As board president, Ostrout is responsible for the organization's governance and leadership, fiscal oversight, legislative and strategic initiatives. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its 150,000 members nationally, to create and maintain professional standards and to advance sound social policies.

The state Capitol-based commission was created by the General Assembly in 1993 to help policymakers prepare for Connecticut's surging population of older adults. Already the nation's seventh oldest state, its population of residents 65 and older will soar 64 percent by 2030.

Connecticut is also home to one million baby boomers—the oldest of whom are approaching 65 themselves—accounting for nearly one-third of its entire population. Medicaid long-term care expenditures alone already make up approximately 14 percent—or more than \$2 billion—of the overall state budget.

Commission on Aging Executive Director Julia Evans Starr said Ostrout's deep experience will help the agency advise legislators, the governor and other policymakers on how the state can make informed public-policy decisions affecting older adults.

“Sherry is respected statewide as one of Connecticut's most knowledgeable and insightful experts on issues affecting older adults and persons with disabilities, particularly concerning long-term care,” she said. “We're very grateful that a policymaker of Sen. Looney's stature has appointed her. “

Evans Starr noted, however, that the state's recently adopted budget imposes a 53 percent budget cut on the agency.

-MORE-

“I have admired the commission’s work in support of older adults and persons with disabilities for many years and feel privileged to have been appointed to its board,” Ostrout said. “It is a dynamic agency that continually demonstrates its strategic value to our state by presenting world-class research and making concrete, fiscally responsible recommendations.”

Ostrout is director of government initiatives for Connecticut Community Care, Inc., a statewide, non-profit organization providing services that help people live at home.

The Commission on Aging recently identified and pursued up to \$11 million in new, untapped federal funds related to the Money Follows the Person program that will soon begin flowing to the state.

The agency’s recommendations to the General Assembly to reform the state’s approach to long-term care would have saved Connecticut \$600 million in 2006, according to independent research by the Center on Aging at the UConn Health Center in Farmington.

The commission oversaw research authorized by the General Assembly and conducted by the Center on Aging in 2006. The long-term care infrastructure-change recommendations included in the research are available on the commission’s website at www.cga.ct.gov/coa.

In addition to its 17 unpaid volunteer board members and four-person professional staff, the commission’s 16 ex officio members include eight legislators and representatives of key Executive Branch agencies.

In carrying out its mission, the commission leads public/private-sector efforts to promote and improve public- policy on older adult issues including health care, long-term care, transportation, financial security, housing, employment, legal assistance and many others.

The agency fills a unique role within state government by building bridges, opening dialogue and seeking solutions between influential groups including the Legislative and Executive branches of state government, local government, the business community, state and local organizations that serve critical needs of older citizens and statewide public/private sector coalitions such as the Connecticut Elder Action Network and Connecticut Long-Term Care Advisory Council.

Ostrout earned a master’s degree in social work from Fordham University and a bachelor of arts degree in the field from Trinity College of Vermont. She was re-elected this year to serve as a New England delegate to the National Social Work Delegate Assembly in Washington.

