

## *Legislative Priorities 2009*



*Advocating for Older Adults of Today and Tomorrow*



*Connecticut Commission on Aging  
State Capitol • 210 Capitol Avenue • Room 509  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860.240.5200 • Website: [www.cga.ct.gov/coa](http://www.cga.ct.gov/coa)  
LTC website: [www.ct.gov/longtermcare](http://www.ct.gov/longtermcare)*

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**Out of Crisis Comes Opportunity!** In these difficult budget times, the Connecticut Commission on Aging pledges to work with state government to discover opportunities to streamline programs and services, institute best practices and maximize resources.

### Mindful of the fiscal climate, Connecticut must:

- ✓ "First do no harm:" Maintain essential services
- ✓ Reaffirm a commitment to and prioritize funding for those most in need
- ✓ Support the infrastructure: ensure a robust provider network for home and health care
- ✓ Think creatively: Break those "steady habits!"

## Facts about older adults in Connecticut:

- ✓ Connecticut's population is already among the oldest in the nation. In addition to 14% of the population already being over age 65, one million baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) make up nearly one-third the state's entire population.
- ✓ The number of Connecticut residents aged 65 and older is projected to increase by 72% between 2005 and 2030.
- ✓ More than 293,000 Connecticut households are headed by people 65 years of age or older and 34,000 of them live on less than \$10,000 a year. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly half have annual incomes under \$30,000.
- ✓ Demand for long-term care services for persons over the age of 40 is projected to grow by 30% by 2030.
- ✓ More than 40% of respondents to the state's Long-Term Care Needs Assessment said that they have no money available to pay for long-term care needs.

**What is long-term care?** The entire range of assistance, services or devices provided over an extended period of time to meet medical, personal and social needs in a variety of settings and locations.

People may need assistance with the basic functions of daily living such as eating, dressing, bathing, transportation, managing finances and shopping...or total, 24-hour skilled care.

~Not Just Nursing Homes

~Not Just Insurance

~Long-term care knows no age or disability boundary!

## The Connecticut Commission on Aging

***The mission of the Connecticut Commission on Aging is to advocate on behalf of Connecticut's present and future generations of older adults and to serve as an objective, credible source of information on issues affecting them.***

The Connecticut Commission on Aging (CoA), based at the State Capitol, was created by the General Assembly in 1993 and established under Connecticut General Statutes 17b-420.

CoA is a non-partisan agency of the General Assembly and serves as an independent resource on aging-related issues for legislators, state agencies, the governor and others in the public and private sectors by proactively recommending and promoting wise policy decisions through fact-based research and assessments.

The CoA advances systemic change in many areas including, but not limited to, long-term care, health care, nutrition, employment, transportation, legal assistance and economic security.

***In its work, the Connecticut Commission on Aging embraces the following Results-Based Accountability Operating Principles:***

- ✓ *Serve as an objective, nonpartisan, credible resource;*
- ✓ *Plan for the needs of today's and tomorrow's older adults;*
- ✓ *Advance independence, dignity and choice for older adults while remaining responsible to all of society; and,*
- ✓ *Promote responsible governing and best practices.*

*For more information about the Connecticut Commission on Aging and its work, please visit [www.cga.ct.gov/coa](http://www.cga.ct.gov/coa).*



## Legislative Priorities 2009

**Main Priority: Ensure the ongoing success of Money Follows the Person and other programs that allow individuals to receive care in their homes and communities.**

Individuals should have real choice in how and where they receive long-term care services and supports, including in their homes and communities.

A number of state programs, waivers and pilots help older adults and persons with disabilities remain in their homes and communities—instead of being institutionalized. These programs provide a higher quality of life and more independence—and can save the state money!

But the present system is *fragmented, institutionally-biased and difficult to navigate*.

In order to provide choice for older adults and persons with disabilities, Connecticut's policymakers must commit to full support and a sweeping redesign of the long-term care infrastructure:

1. Uphold the commitment to reinvest the \$9 million in new federal money (over five years) that Connecticut will receive under Money Follows the Person... Public Act 08-180 creates the Long-Term Care Reinvestment Account to ensure that this money goes back into the system.
2. Address the existing and worsening long-term care workforce shortage: We must invest in initiatives to recruit and train more direct care workers and pay providers reasonable rates.
3. Reject Governor Rell's proposals to reduce home- and community-based services. Restore funding for CT Home Care Program for Elders; prescription drugs (including ConnPACE); and PCA, ABI and other Medicaid waivers that help people remain in their homes.

### Other Legislative Priorities:

4. Reject Governor Rell's proposal to eliminate the CT Commission on Aging.
5. The Commission on Aging supports legislation that works to help "rebalance" the long-term care system, promoting more choice and independence in where and how people receive care.
6. Equalize the income limits between ConnPACE and Medicare Savings Plans (QI and SLMB)—OFA estimates that this proposal may help almost 40,000 older adults and persons with disabilities in Connecticut save money on health care costs. **Support HB 5056**
7. Promote flexibility in workplace employment policies and practices, particularly for older workers. Baby Boomers are "redefining retirement years;" many need or want to work, but on a reduced or more flexible schedule. The State of Connecticut, in its role as employer, should pilot innovative worker-friendly initiatives and lead the way for private employers to do the same.

#### **Did you know?**

~ The CT Home Care Program for Disabled Adults will end on June 30, 2009 if no legislative action is taken.

~ The Connecticut Commission on Aging (CoA) has served for 15 years as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for CT's older adults and persons with disabilities. CoA builds bridges between citizens and state government and among many government agencies. The initiatives we support can save CT taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

For more information about the Connecticut Commission on Aging and its work, please visit [www.cga.ct.gov/coa](http://www.cga.ct.gov/coa).