

# COLORADO COMMISSION ON AGING



ANNUAL REPORT  
State Fiscal Year July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

Stephen M. Bender, Chair

## **Information about the Colorado Commission on Aging**

The Older Coloradans Act provides authority for the Colorado Commission on Aging to carry out the following purposes:

- Conduct, and encourage other organizations to conduct studies of the problems of the state's older people;
- Assist governmental and private agencies to coordinate their efforts on behalf of the aging and aged in order to reduce duplication and waste of effort;
- Promote and aid in the establishment of local programs and services for the aging and aged. The Commission shall assist governmental and private agencies by designing surveys that may be used locally to determine needs of older people; by recommending the creation of services; by collecting and distributing information on aging; and by assisting public and private organizations in all ways the Commission deems appropriate.
- Conduct promotional activities and programs of public education on issues facing the aging;
- Review existing aging programs and make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly for improvement in such programs;
- Advise and make recommendations to the State Department, the State Office on Aging, created pursuant to part 2 of this article, on the problems, programs, and services for the aging and aged.

### **SFY 2005-2006 Membership**

The Commission consists of seventeen members appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate. Two members must be appointed from each congressional district (one from each major political party and when a vacancy in District 4 occurs, one member must be from west of the continental divide). One member must be appointed from the state at-large, one member must be appointed from among the membership of the senate and one member must be appointed from among the membership of the house. All members are appointed for terms of four years each, commencing July 1 in the year of appointment. The 2005 - 2006 Commission membership includes:

#### **Congressional Districts**

Danette Reitz (District 1-D)  
Joseph Sims (District 1-R)  
Bruce Eller (District 2-D)  
Barbara Martig (District 2-R)  
Sheila Casey (District 3-D)  
Mary Jane Hangs (District 3-R)  
Mark Shelton (District 4-D)  
Gerald "Jerry" Wathen (District 4-R)  
Steve Bender (District 5-D)  
Richard Larsen (District 5-R)  
Maureen Robinson (District 6-D)  
Russ DenBraber (District 6-R)  
Marian Fairbank (District 7 – R)  
Peggy Spaulding (District 7 – D)

#### **Member At-Large**

Kathy Turley - R

#### **Senate Representative**

Honorable Paula Sandoval-D

#### **House Representative**

Honorable Mark Larson-R

### **Contact Information**

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**SFY 05-06 Commissioners:**

Back Row (L to R): Maureen Robinson, Peggy Spaulding, Danette Reitz, Mark Shelton, Sen. Paula Sandoval, Barb Martig, Jamie Malone, Jerry Wathen, Joe Sims

Front Row (L to R): Bruce Eller, Sheila Casey, Steve Bender, Mary Jane Hangs, Marion Fairbank

Not pictured: Rich Larsen, Rep. Mark Larson, Russ DenBraber, Kathy Turley, Jeanette Hensley

## **Mission**

The mission of the Colorado Commission on Aging (CCOA) is to inform and advise decision-makers and to advocate for better quality of life for all seniors.

## **Authority and Appropriation**

The CCOA is established under the authority of the Older Coloradans Act (Sections 26-11-100.1 to 26-11-106) to serve as the primary advisory body on all matters affecting older persons. The CCOA is a volunteer organization of seventeen people appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate committee to serve for four years and not more than two terms. There is a Republican and a Democrat representing each of the seven Congressional Districts, one at-large Commissioner, and one member each of different parties from the State Senate and House.

In fiscal year 2005-2006, the Legislature appropriated federal and state general funds to the Commission to carry out its statutory responsibilities. The source for federal funds is the Older Americans Act. Members of the CCOA do not receive compensation for their services, but are reimbursed for expenses incurred by the performance of their official duties. Reimbursements are provided in accordance with the State's fiscal rules and policies.

## Officers

Officers for Fiscal Year July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006 were: **Stephen M. Bender**, Chair; **Sheila Casey**, Vice Chair; **Barbara Martig**, Legislative Chair; and **Mary Jane Hangs**, past Chair.

## Commission Roles and Responsibilities

Following are the roles of each committee.

**Colorado Commission on Aging's** role is to:

1. Represent all of Colorado's 60+ population and their caregivers with specific focus on rural and frail elderly.
2. Address health and social needs and issues, using a broad-based approach.
3. Support or oppose issues through education, dialogue, and advocacy activities.
4. Focus on understanding the issues and needs of Colorado's 60+ population; understand federal policies as they impact Colorado and its 60+ population; and maintain awareness of other states' programs as these may provide ideas or models for serving Colorado's 60 + population, including the study of demographic changes.
5. Collaboratively work with the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Aging and Adult Services Division, recognizing that occasions may arise at which time Department/Division and Commission perspectives may not be in harmony. Recommend state aging priorities to the Division of Aging and Adult Services, Colorado Department of Human Services, Governor and Legislature.
6. Take positions on selected issues and collaborate with the efforts of other community-based senior organizations.
7. Support activities such as public hearings and recognition programs as available and appropriate.
8. Review issues related to the Old Age Pension Health Care Program.
9. Support changing the \$10 million cap of the Old Age Pension Health Care Program through broad-based support to be sought from Colorado's aging services network. This includes the possibility of recommending a constitutional amendment to address this issue.
10. Participate in public hearings in conjunction with the Area Agencies on Aging and the State Unit on Aging in the development of the State's four-year plan. Review Area Agency on Aging's (AAA) programs and funding to address issues and priorities for Planning and Service Areas (PSA) in Congressional Districts.
11. Initiate and participate in the Colorado Governor's White House Conference on Aging activity, to coincide with national efforts of a White House Conference on Aging to be held December 11 - 14, 2005.
12. Be knowledgeable of priority issues in aging at the National Level and make recommendations when appropriate, including the review of long-term care reform in reference to Medicare/Medicaid changes.
13. Conduct Older Americans Month event. Sponsor and promote the Centenarian Program. Commissioners are actively involved in identifying Centenarians, and participate in the recognition for seniors who are celebrating their 100 or 100 plus birthdays.

## **Committee Roles and Responsibilities**

The Colorado Commission on Aging is comprised of four committees:  
**Executive, Policy/Legislative, Community Relations, and Strategic Planning.**

**Executive Committee** role is:

1. Provide leadership to Commission members concerning duties/responsibilities and strategic planning.
2. Provide input in the hiring of a new State Aging and Adult Services Division Director when necessary, and serve as the liaison with the Division of Aging and Adult Services.
3. Be empowered to act on emergency matters as intervals between regular Commission meetings, such action to be reviewed at the next Commission meeting.
4. Develop the CCOA meeting agendas.

**Policy/Legislative Committee** role is:

1. Stay informed and involved on legislative initiatives for older citizens of Colorado.
2. Collaborate with organizations that represent the interests and needs of Older Coloradans.
3. Monitor initiatives for Improving Quality of Care in Nursing Homes/Assisted Living Residences.
4. Provide input to Colorado Department of Human Services, Aging and Adult Services Division and the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing in maintaining existing programs for older citizens in Colorado.
5. Participate and educate public officials, the general public and older citizens in Colorado on senior issues and initiatives pertaining to legislation.
6. Review and provide input on Long-Term Care Reform.
7. Participate in legislative action organizations/groups as appropriate.
8. Advocate for Old Age Pension recipients as well as programs.

**Community Relations Committee** role is:

1. Sponsor the annual Allen M.A. Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy Lecture Award.
2. Sponsor the Older Americans Month Centenarian Celebration. (This year it was held in Greeley Colorado).
3. Participate in Senior Days at the Capitol.
4. Participate in the Eastern Plains Legislative Speak Out.
5. Participate in the Western Slope Legislative Speak Out.

**Strategic Planning Committee** role is:

1. Set direction and priorities for the Commission.
2. Establish goals and objectives.
3. Establish action plans on achieving the goals and objectives.

## **2005-2006 Meetings**

### **CCOA meetings for the fiscal year July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006.**

July 14 & 15, 2005	Annual Meeting - Warwick Hotel	Denver
September 29 & 30, 2005	Allen Buckingham Awards - Warwick Hotel	Denver
November 10, 2005	CCOA Meeting - Warwick Hotel	Denver
February 19 & 10, 2006	CCOA Meeting - Warwick Hotel	Denver
March 29, 2006	CCOA Meeting – State Human Services Senior Days at the Capital – State Capital	Denver
May 25 & 26, 2006	CCOA Meeting – Best Western Regency Centenarians Celebration – Evans Recreation Center,	Greeley Evans

These meetings provided the Commission the opportunity to review legislation, state and federal public policies of social programs for citizens sixty years of age and older in our state. As a result of these meetings the Commission was able to meet its mandated purpose by advising the Departments of Health Care Policy and Financing and Human Services, Division of Aging & Adult Services, concerning program changes, budgetary issues, and policy issues.

## **2005-2006 Year Review**

Fiscal year 2005-2006 presented another year of significant fiscal challenges for social programs to support the quality of life for older Colorado citizens. The Commission's focus was to collaborate with state-wide senior advocacy representatives to support the Statewide Strengths and Needs Assessment of Older Adults in Colorado; to celebrate and recognize the centenarians in our state; and to work with our state Legislators, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, and the Colorado Department of Human Services to keep existing Medicaid programs intact; to encourage state departments to maintain the integrity of programs for the frail, elderly, blind, handicapped, disabled, most vulnerable populations, and low-income seniors.

## I. 2005-2006 Legislation/Policy Decisions Impacting Older Citizens of Colorado

During the legislative session, the Commission collaborated with state-wide stakeholders by informing state legislators about the strengths and needs of older citizens in our state, the importance of adequately funding these important programs, and the need to focus on preventive health care supportive programs such as Home & Community Based Services to keep people in their homes and out of costly health care settings.

The Commission reviewed and discussed the effects of Referenda C and D. Bills presented to the state legislative body were reviewed and the Commission chose whether to support, monitor, or oppose various bills.

The Commission studied and advocated for legislation on the Federal level pertaining to Older American Act programs and the reauthorization of the Older American's Act (OAA) now called the *Senior Independence Act*, H.R. 5293.

The following bills were supported by the Colorado Commission on Aging. These bills have been signed by the Governor and will become law.

**HBO6-1018** – An increase in funding to the Older Coloradans Fund in all future years.

**HB06-1103** – Concerning Forfeiture Provisions in Agreements affecting persons in facilities providing residential care (“audacity to die” bill).

**SB06-057**—Concerning creation of the missing senior citizens alert program (Senior Amber Alert Bill).

**SB06-121** –Concerning Surrogate Decision Makers for Health Care Benefits.

**HB06 1200** –Concerning Energy Related Assistance to Low-income Households from the proceeds of the Operational Account of the Severance Tax Trust Fund.

## II. White House Conference on Aging

Commission members representing Colorado as delegates to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) in Washington, DC included Barbara Martig, District 2, Mark Shelton, District 4, Stephen M. Bender, District 5, & Kathy Turley, At-large. Jeanette Hensley, Director, Aging & Adult Services also attended as a Colorado delegate and Jamie Malone, AAS attended as a WHCOA volunteer. WHCOA delegates have been meeting to develop a strategy for implementation of the Conference's top ten resolutions in the state of Colorado.

Delegates shared recommendations to be sent to the President and Congress on the pressing aging issues of today and the future. Delegates in attendance selected the top 50 resolutions to present and participated in working groups to develop strategies for implementing the resolutions. The top 10 resolutions as voted by the delegates are:

- Reauthorize the Older Americans Act Within the First Six Months Following the 2005 White House Conference on Aging
- Develop a Coordinated, Comprehensive Long-Term Care Strategy by Supporting Public and Private Sector Initiatives that Address Financing, Choice, Quality, Service Delivery, and the Paid and Unpaid Workforce

- Ensure that Older Americans Have Transportation Options to Retain Their Mobility and Independence
- Strengthen and Improve the Medicaid Program for Seniors
- Strengthen and Improve the Medicare Program
- Support Geriatric Education and Training for All Healthcare Professionals, Paraprofessionals, Health Profession Students, and Direct Care Workers
- Promote Innovative Models of Non-Institutional Long-Term Care
- Improve Recognition, Assessment, and Treatment of Mental Illness and Depression Among Older Americans
- Attain Adequate Numbers of Healthcare Personnel in All Professions Who are Skilled, Culturally Competent, and Specialized Geriatrics
- Improve State and Local Based Integrated Delivery Systems to Meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century Needs of Seniors

By statute, the final report from the conference will be presented to the President and Congress by June 2006. For a full listing of the 50 resolutions, visit [www.whcoa.gov](http://www.whcoa.gov).

### **III. Eastern Plains Speak Out**

The Eastern Plains Legislative Speak Out was held in Sterling, October 6-7. After daily seminars a banquet was held with the keynote speaker Caryl Harvey. A legislative forum was held and moderated by Cathy Shull, executive director of Progressive 15, with panel members Representative Angie Paccione – District 53, Representative Cory Gardner – District 63, Mac McGraw, who is an aide to Senator Salazar, Rob Fillion, and Jerry Sonneberg. The three-hour debate centered on Ref. C and D. CCOA Commissioner Jerry Wathen represented the Commission at the Speak Out.

### **IV. Western Slope Legislative Round up**

The Western Slope Legislative Round up was held in Grand Junction, September 7-8. Jeanette Hensley, Aging and Adult Services Director was the keynote speaker. Round table discussions were held regarding Information/Education on Senior Issues and Programs, Serving Local Communities, Transportation Issues, Energy Impact Assistance, Health Related Issues, Legal Matters, Social Security, and General Legislative Matters. Legislators in attendance were Representatives Gary Linstrom – District 56, Ray Rose – District 58, Josh Penry – District 54, and Mark Larson – District 59. Senators in attendance were Jack Taylor – District 8, Ron Teck - 7, and Jim Isgar – District 6. CCOA Commissioner Mary Jane Hangs represented the Commission at the Round up.

### **V. Centenarians Celebrations**

The Commission sponsors the annual Centenarian Celebration during the Older Americans Month celebrated annually in May. The Centenarian event is a promotional activity of the Commission on Aging to celebrate the lives of centenarians across the state, recognize their individual century of achievement, and focus the attention of all Coloradans on the political and social issues of aging. This year's celebration "Graduating the First Century" was held at the



Evans Recreation Center in Evans, Colorado on May 26th honoring 25 centenarians for their life-long achievements.

Opening remarks were made by Sheila Casey, Vice Chair of the Colorado Commission on Aging followed by the National Anthem, sung by Jan Giese, Ms. Senior Colorado 2002. The guest speaker was Dolores Benallo, Ms. Senior Colorado 2005 who enlightened the audience with her perspectives on aging. Honored guests from the Greeley and Fort Collins area were: Rep. James Riesberg, HD 51, Sen. Paula Sandoval, SD 34, and Rep. Dale K. Hall, HD 22. The commencement ceremony was conducted by Rep. Angie Paccione, HD 53, with Pomp and Circumstance playing in the background performed by Gerald Wathen, CCOA District 4.

The Commission added an intergenerational approach this year including students from the University of Northern Colorado Gerontology Studies and Colorado State University Center on Aging who conducted interviews with the centenarians and assisted in the presentation of the awards.

Life Care Centers of America and Life Care at Home were the co-sponsors with the Commission on Aging for this event.



**Commissioner Mark Shelton with centenarian honoree Hipolito Flores, age 100.**

## **VI. Allen Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy Lecture**

On September 30, 2005, the Commission sponsored the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Allen M. A. Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy award at the Warwick Hotel, Denver, Colorado. This year the Commission was pleased to recognize the contribution of Norma Blatnick. Norma was born in the little town of Baxter Springs, Kansas to Edward F. and Grace Turnbull. She attended school there until she turned eight. Then the Turnbills moved to Leadville, Colorado. When she was fourteen, the family moved to Canon City. It was there she met her future husband, Henry Blatnick. When Norma turned sixteen, they were married and lived in Canon City where

Henry worked for CF & I in their coal mines. They raised four children, Henry Lee, Pamela, Carol and Bill. In 1952, Henry was transferred to Segundo to work for thirty-eight years in the Allen mine. Norma would go to the Segundo Senior Center to watch her daughter, Pamela teach arts and crafts to area children. Norma got involved and was asked by the Center Coordinator to teach ceramics as the man who had been teaching the course, was about to retire. Norma learned from him and took over the ceramics class. In the early years of the Center, people brought food to share at potluck type meals. In about 1975, senior nutrition meals became available through the Council of Governments (COG) in Trinidad. Norma persuaded the people to contribute \$2.00 per meal knowing that it costs much more than that for the Council of Governments to make and deliver a nutritious meal. The Las Animas County Commissioners began assisting Senior Centers and had given the Center \$1500.00 per year for a long time. It costs more like \$5000.00 to run the center, so Norma became adept at raising funds. In addition to the responses in the nomination form, Norma arranged trips to Las Vegas, Nevada, the Royal Gorge, Cave of the Winds, the Sanctuary at Chimayo, New Mexico, churches in Santa Fe, New Mexico and picnics at nearby Monument Lake. Norma has single-handedly kept the Segundo area seniors nourished and entertained for about 32 years. In this rural and isolated Purgatoire River Canyon where coal mining was the primary industry, Norma has been a beacon of love and caring for all the area elderly, past and present. She is truly an inspiration.

The Senior Legacy Lecture originated in 1994 and was awarded to Allen Buckingham posthumously in December 1998; it was then that the event was renamed in his honor. Allen promoted the needs of older persons especially that they live in dignity, have freedom and choice and realize full and active participation in their society. The spirit of his legacy is celebrated annually.



**Recipient of the 2006 Allen Buckingham Award Norma Blatnick, receiving her award.**

## **VII. Senior Day at the Capitol – 2006**

Senior Day at the Capitol was held on March 29, 2006. Attendance was excellent with standing room only by mid-morning. The featured speaker was Percy Devine, Regional Director of the U.S. Administration on Aging. He discussed "Seniors of the Future". Jeanette Hensley, Director of the State Office on Aging and Adult Services reported on the recent White House Conference on Aging. Numerous state legislators spoke to the group on legislative issues and bills currently up for review. In addition, Speaker of the House, Rep. Andrew Romanoff, District 6 and State Senate President, Sen. Joan Fitz-Gerald, District 6, also spoke to the group.

**It was a packed house at the 2006 Senior Day at the Capitol**

**Held in the Old Supreme Court Chambers.**



## **VIII. Education**

The Commission recognizes that continuing education on public issues, state and federal programs, is crucial to our ability to function as a credible advisory board. As such, the Commission is dedicated and committed to make education a part of each of the scheduled meetings. Some of the educational programs provided to the Commissioners and the public include:

- Older Americans Act Reauthorization Principles
- Adult Protective Services
- AARP Legislative priorities
- Reports from the Colorado Association of Area Agencies on Aging
- Fitzsimons State Veterans Nursing Home update
- Tabor Initiatives & Amendment 23 fiscal issues
- Veterans benefits
- Medicare's Prescription Drug Card Update
- Federal budget updates
- Social Security
- Consumer directed care for the elderly (CDCE)
- Nursing facility and assisted living regulation updates

## **IX. Congressional Liaisons**

The Commission initiated invitations to regularly scheduled meetings for Colorado's congressional delegations and this year hosted staff representation and presentations from Senators Ken Salazar and Wayne Allard and Representative Marilyn Musgrave's offices. Staff presentations covered national programs and issues that affect older Coloradans, such as, Medicare Part D, the Deficit Reduction Act, Older Americans Act reauthorization, and the White House Conference on Aging resolutions.



**Centenarians Elsie Williamson and Bessie Washburn entertain the guests with their singing and piano playing at the 2006 Centenarian Celebration.**

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