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COLORADO COMMISSION ON AGING

SUPPORTING COLORADO'S SENIOR POPULATION

2011/12 ANNUAL REPORT

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Report from the Chair

This past year as chair of the Colorado Commission on Aging, I've often look back and reflect on the achievements and renewal of commitment to our aging population.

The Colorado Commission on Aging is charged with the duties of reviewing programs and services to the aging and the aged, assisting government and private agencies to coordinate efforts, and to advise and make recommendations to the state department, the Governor and the General Assembly. We have monitored and advocated for legislation that impacts the quality of life for the aging and the aged.

The cornerstone of our success has been based on the collaboration of the dedicated members on the Commission, the Area Agencies on Aging, and other aging stakeholders. This partnership has allowed us to help ensure that the lives of our aging citizens exist with dignity, security and self-fulfillment.

The Colorado Commission on Aging's membership consists of seventeen members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate's Health and Human Services committee. Two from each Congressional District, one of whom shall be from each major political party. One member shall be appointed from the state at large, one member shall be appointed from among the membership of the senate and one from the house of representatives.

This year, we will experience an unprecedented departure of seven members due to term limitations and congressional redistricting. I want to recognize these individuals who have dedicated their time and efforts to advocating for the development and improvement of services that affects the lives of our aging communities:

Steve Bender, Sheila Casey, Gretchen Cerveny, Russ DeBraber, Maureen Robinson, Debera Stewart, Representative Tom Massey, and, the departure of Dan Daly, who was the Director of Aging & Adult Services.

These are the individuals who have provided the commission with the knowledge, guidance, wisdom, education and leadership to serve and perform our duties as volunteers and advocates.

Thank you for all you have done to build stronger and improved aging services. You have served, and I am sure will continue to serve in your districts with passion, and dedication. All of you have made a difference through your contributions to our aging population.

For those of us who remain and for those who will be joining the Commission as new members we salute you and we will continue to move forward and plan ahead to meet the demands for services, and to address the challenges of our increasing aging population.

I am honored to have served with you.

Vivian Stovall, Chair — Colorado Commission on Aging

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Community Relations Committee is co-chaired by Gretchen Cerveny and Alice Langley with Maureen Robinson, Vivian Stovall and Debera Stewart as members. The Community Relations Committee believes that involvement in the community is a high priority and helps all Coloradans learn more about the Commission and the activities it supports. During 2011/2012 they helped sponsor a number of important annual events.

SENIOR DAY AT THE CAPITOL – MARCH 14, 2012



The event this year was held on March 14, 2012 in the Supreme Court chambers of the Capitol. It was estimated that over 300 were in attendance and by show of hands, over half of the attendees were attending for the first time.

Mike Drake, chair of the Senior Day activities, opened the day and introduced Mary Catherine Rabbit from the Legal Center as well as the keynote speaker, Elizabeth Garner, Colorado State Demographer. Ms. Garner presented information regarding the large increase in the senior population that will be expected over the next decade in Colorado.

In addition, 13 legislators were able to address the group regarding various legislation that would be proposed during this term. The morning ended with the arrival of Governor John Hickenlooper to address the attendees and show support for the seniors of Colorado.

Lunch at the Central Presbyterian Church followed.

CENTENARIAN CELEBRATION



Each year, CCOA sponsors the annual Centenarian Celebration during Older Americans Month in May. The event recognizes Coloradans who have reached their milestone 100th (or older) birthday!

This year's event was held on May 17, 2012 in Pueblo, Colorado. Six Centenarians were honored by Governor John Hickenlooper who designated this day as Colorado Centenarian Day. Each Centenarian received a copy of the Proclamation signed by the Governor and special recognition of their lifelong achievements.

The Regional Administrator for the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Percy Devine, III, spoke and entertainment was provided by Pueblo West elementary school children, the Desert Sage Singers.

It was a wonderful celebration and served as a reminder that a century of living provides a rich perspective for us all.

CCOA volunteers provide their leadership

THE 18TH ANNUAL ALLEN BUCKINGHAM SENIOR LEADERSHIP LEGACY AWARD



Bob Lankey, a volunteer extraordinaire, received the 2011 Alan Buckingham award at the CCOA meeting in November. He was nominated by his peers as one who has made noteworthy contributions to the senior community in Colorado.

Since his retirement from the Bureau of Reclamation in 1992, Bob has been an active volunteer in the numerous organizations working on behalf of older adults. He has put in countless hours on the Jefferson County Council on Aging, serving as president and as a member of the legislative committee. He serves on the funding sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on Aging for the Denver Region Area Agency on Aging. For the past 17 years Bob has served as counselor, helping seniors file state and federal income tax returns. He is a District Coordinator for the AARP Tax Aide Program Southwest Denver Metro Area. For twenty years Bob has been the senior giving hundreds of volunteer hours to help seniors on a personal level as well as a policy level. Bob is truly a member of the "Greatest Generation"

The Allen Buckingham Award is named for Allen M.A. Buckingham, who served on the CCOA from 1986 to 1998 and additionally held other key positions in his career. The Allen Buckingham Senior Legacy Award is given to an individual who has made a noteworthy contribution to the senior community in Colorado. Allen promoted the needs of older adults helping to ensure that they live in dignity, have freedom of choice and realize full and active participation in society. The spirit of his service is celebrated annually with this award.

THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Legislative Committee was Co-Chaired this year by Russ DenBraber and Sheila Casey. Also serving on the Committee were Vivian Stovall, Leanne Abdnor, and Sara Canfield.

Again this year, the committee was very active, meeting weekly via conference call to review bills as they were introduced, recommend a position (if appropriate) to the full Commission, and then track process and scheduling of bills. Additionally, members of the Committee attended either in person or by conference call meetings of other advocacy groups to gather additional information about bills.

This year, the Commission formally supported ten bills and formally opposed one. The Governor signed seven of the 10 bills. Three of the bills we supported as well as the bill we opposed did not pass, but rather were postponed indefinitely.

All CCOA meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend. Please call 303-866-5288 or visit our website www.coloradoaging.com for a schedule of upcoming meetings.

The Committee also spend a great deal of time working with stakeholders and legislators as well as the Executive branch on the envisioned move of the State Unit on Aging from the Department of Human Services to the Department of HealthCare Policy and Financing. Advocacy around this issue will continue during the "intermission" between this year's session and the next session.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Initially the Commission has always been involved with four strategic initiatives to promote interest in aging issues and those who support aging throughout their service. These include the annual Centenarian Celebration, the Allen Buckingham Award for outstanding service to the senior community, Senior Day at the Capitol and in alternating years the Eastern Plains or Western Slope Legislative Speak outs. This year was no exception. The Centenarian Celebration was held in Pueblo at the Historic Pueblo Union Depot. Senior Day at the Capitol was held in March and was successful because of the many partners who promote and support funding and information for programs affecting aging in Colorado. The Commission members attended the Eastern Slope Speak – Out in Sterling and listened and learned about the issues affecting seniors on the Eastern Plains of Colorado.

Beyond the four initiatives that are part of the Commission work every year are the challenges we face long-term representing the State of Colorado. Strategically our major goal is "relationship building" not only in our home communities and Congressional districts but on a state-wide level. Commissioners are currently participating in the Aging Policy Advisory Committee with the State Unit on Aging. Some commissioners are involved with Aging Councils and Task Forces, Colorado Senior Lobby, Older Americans Coalition and many others that bring a wealth of understanding to the discussion and decisions made by Commissions in recommending changes and/ or improvements to the Governor's office. Future strategic plans and challenges include expanding the relationship building to include a C4A partnership (Colorado Association of Area Agencies on Aging), as well as expanding relationships with public and private aging service providers, developing an understanding of the Aging issues related to the major demographic changes in Colorado over the next 10 years, and remaining current and involved with Legislative issues affecting service and a strong funding stream to support aging concerns in Colorado.

AN APPRECIATIVE FAREWELL

The Commissioners want to extend our appreciation and thanks to Dan Daly who is now with the City of Boulder. Dan took the helm as Director of Aging and Adult Services in 2010 and served as our liaison with the Governor's office as well as the Department of Human Services. We thank Dan for his steady guidance and thoughtful insight.

Serving the Commission as the interim director is Todd Coffey, Manager of the State Unit on Aging, Colorado Department of Human Services. Todd brings a wealth of knowledge to the table and we appreciate his commitment to Colorado's elders.

CCOA Information

During this past legislative session there were two bills that created strong advocacy from our older citizens, providers, and stakeholders; the reinstatement of the Senior Property Homestead Tax Exemption in the Long Bill, and the passing of House Bill 12-1326. House Bill 12-1326 will potentially increase services for older adults in three areas: 1) increasing the Old Age Pension amount from \$699 to \$725 per month, 2) providing over \$3 million in funding for dental services to individuals receiving Old Age Pension as well as certain Medicaid programs, and 3) the possibility of increased funding to State Funding for Senior Services through a reallocation of unspent funds in the Homestead Tax Exemption program.

There was one issue that caused priority attention from all aging stakeholders and those consumers of services for the aging population; the proposed move of the State Unit on Aging from the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) to the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF). The goal of this proposal was to respond to concerns regarding the fragmentation of services, inconsistent levels of service, quality of care, and inefficient use of the state's limited resources.

The proposal for the merge was submitted to the Joint Budget Committee of the Colorado General Assembly. The Joint Budget Committee requested an examination of the proposed relocation. After the review of the Departments and examining the system and the impacts of relocating these programs, CDHS and HCPF submitted a report outlining the proposal for relocation. The proposed recommendations included:

- Improving the consistency of administration of programs and services by having all providers work with the same state agency;

- Increasing the consistency of communication regarding rule-making, policies and procedures, and other programmatic requirements;
- Leveraging new fiscal and programmatic opportunities for long-term services and supports that created through the passage of health care reform; and
- The engagement by the Departments of a wide range of system stakeholders in a broad effort to re-design the long-term services and supports system.

Based on these recommendations Senator Betty Boyd agreed to sponsor a bill to legislate the move of the programs. Senator Boyd felt strongly that there should be input in the wording of the bill to put together a work group of stakeholders to assist with drafting a bill.

Due to the overwhelming concerns of families and stakeholders regarding the timing of the bill, and what was considered to be too fast of a process for reviewing and making sound recommendations, Senator Boyd did not introduce the bill. Nevertheless, a work group of stakeholders will be created during the off session to perform similar duties that the Transformation Council would have done. This process will allow a bill to be introduced during the 2013 legislative session, with the recommendations of this work group.

The Colorado Commission on Aging felt that this process, prior to the introduction of a bill, would be a positive and effective solution to ensure that all aspects of an efficient move of the programs will take place and minimize negative impact on the users of these services. The Commission would also like to thank Senator Betty Boyd for ensuring that the aging stakeholders would be part of the representation on the Transformational Council.

Commissioners



Front Row, left to right: *Dan Daly, Alice Langley, Ruth Long, Gretchen Cerveny, Maureen Robinson, Vivian Stovall*

Back Row, left to right: *Karl Aguilera, Russ DenBraber, Sara Canfield, Linda Sanden, Steve Bender, Sheila Casey, Leann Abdnor, Betty Sweeney*

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