

COLORADO COMMISSION ON AGING



Advocating for Seniors

Annual Report

2018 - 2019



Mission Statement

The Colorado Commission on Aging was established in 1964 to inform and advise decision makers and to advocate for the quality of life of all seniors.



COLORADO
Office of Community
Access & Independence

Division of Aging & Adult Services

Report from the chair FY 2018-19

In Fiscal Year 2018-19, the Colorado Commission on Aging (CCOA) saw key staff changes related to the change in the governor's administration. As always, CDHS Aging and Adult Services staff were very supportive to the members of the CCOA, despite several staff carrying more than one position within their reporting structure.



One change was in the senior adviser on aging position. Janice Blanchard stepped into the role when Wade Buchanan left to take a position with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. The senior adviser on aging role is part of the governor's Cabinet and is funded by a grant from the NextFifty Initiative. This position stemmed from recommendations by the Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging (SAPGA) and was supported by the CCOA.

The CCOA had ongoing opportunities throughout the year to hear about challenges and successes around the state, through presentations and on-site meetings. These presentations allow members of the CCOA and other organizations to collaborate in a variety of ways. By sharing insight from additional members of the community, CCOA members and those collaborative organizations share best practices, successes in reaching out to their senior community, and can discuss challenges that service providers face.

Hearing presentations from local Area Agencies on Aging, as well as direct service providers, the CCOA gained knowledge we can share with other senior service providers around the state. The CCOA also held panel discussions surrounding the ombudsman program, long-term care and other community living services for our aging population.

By holding meetings around the state, including several rural communities, commissioners were allowed to see and hear the challenges our rural service providers face in serving their communities. We also had the opportunity to recognize several centenarians at our annual Centenarian Celebration, held in Aurora.

The CCOA commissioners who served in FY 2018-19 were Paulette St. James (CD1), Ron DeVries (CD1), Ruth Long (CD2), Sean Wood (CD2), Debra Herrera (CD3), Kathleen Hall (CD3), Connie Ring (CD4), Julie Cozad (CD4), Joe Urban (CD5), Jody A. Barker (CD5), Steve Grund (CD6), Ryan Burmood (CD6), Jane Barnes (CD7), Christina Johnson (CD7), Chad Federwitz (at-large), and state Sens. Nancy Todd and Jessie Danielson.

In the coming year, the CCOA will continue to collaborate, share information and find ways to advocate for our ever-growing older adult population.

—Jody A. Barker, Chairman 2018-19

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jody A. Barker".

Senior Day at the Capitol

This year, the traditional Senior Day at the Capitol, held annually in mid-March was scheduled the same day that a massive snowstorm hit Denver and the Rocky Mountain region. For this reason, the event was postponed. Unfortunately, a second large snowstorm arrived the same day of the postponement date. The Colorado Commission on Aging and the Colorado Senior Lobby group held a modified Senior Day event at an off-site location.



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Hospice volunteer receives Allen Buckingham Award

The CCOA hosts the annual Allen Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy Award each year in January in the Denver metro area. In order to ensure that the best possible candidates for the award are considered, the CCOA extends the invitation to aging organizations, community groups and individuals who work, volunteer, or are caretakers of Colorado seniors, to submit nominations for individuals who have excelled in these areas.

Some of the award criteria include: exemplary volunteer or employment based leadership, experiences, and wisdom over time, participation and contribution to activities that promote well-being and quality of life for seniors and/or recognized accomplishments related to the field of aging.

This year, the Allen Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy Award winner was Walter Blake from Evergreen. He has been a volunteer with Mount Evans Home Health Care & Hospice for more than six years. He has served in the capacity of respite volunteer for hospice patients and their families, which allows family members a much-needed break from their challenging responsibilities. In addition, he has served as a mountain journey volunteer. In this role, he visits and serves as an ambassador for hospice clients who are socially isolated and need a loving volunteer to monitor their health and well-being. Blake has also provided transportation for patients and clients to doctors' appointments. Finally, in addition to all of the other roles he plays, he is a vigil volunteer who will sit with patients the entire night, so that they



Walter Blake, winner of the Annual Allen Buckingham Award, received his plaque from Commissioner Jane Barnes, Vice Chair of the Colorado Commission on Aging.

are not alone through the dying process. Blake has the compassion and sensitivity to be an excellent volunteer. A former veteran, he is able to converse with patients who are veterans and need that extra bit of understanding and passion for what they have been through. He follows through with the health and well-being of his patients. Blake provided transportation for a dear patient in his late 90s for over a year, getting to know the family and supporting all involved. Blake has a very special bond with patients and is a role model for new volunteers coming to the organization. He brings his dog, Perry, to many of his visits. This gentle giant is able to bring a smile or even speech to those who have not otherwise been responsive. Blake was awarded the 2018 Mount Evans Volunteer of the Year Award for his amazing service to this organization and to the patients that are served.



Co-workers, family and friends surround Walter Blake to support him for his recognition award. Blake volunteers with Mount Evans Home Health Care & Hospice, holding several volunteer positions over the years.

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Colorado Commission on Aging recognizes Colorado Centenarians for lifelong contributions

In May 2019, the CCOA hosted the annual Centenarian Celebration in Aurora at the Summit Conference and Events Center. This event honors centenarians throughout the state through a recognition luncheon, a signed certificate from the governor and introductions by each commission member. This year, five centenarians and their families from throughout the metro area were recognized at the annual luncheon.

Janice Blanchard, senior policy advisor to the governor, was the keynote speaker. She educated the audience on the fact that several communities throughout the world have numerous residents who live over the age of 100. In these communities, people exercise, have a sense of purpose and stay active in the community through friendships and activities. She discussed the key ingredients to a long life and honored and praised the centenarians and their families in attendance. In addition to her presentation, Blanchard read the proclamation from Gov. Jared Polis recognizing our Colorado centenarians.

The honored centenarians and their families included Frank Cunningham, John Steinke, Genevieve Urban, Alice Webb and Grace Womeldorff.



Steve Grund, commissioner from District 6 read a biography and certificate, signed by the governor, before presenting it to centenarian Frank Cunningham.



The CCOA meets with Colorado centenarians at the annual Centenarian Celebration held in Aurora on May 17. Centenarians and their families attended this monumental recognition event.

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CCOA members and contact information

Ron DeVries, CD1	303.951.5208	Jody A. Barker, Chair, CD5	719.205.8242
Paulette St. James, CD1	303.919.1641	Ryan Burmood, CD6	720.308.2461
Ruth Long, CD2	970.443.5844	Jane Barnes, Vice Chair, CD7	720.979.6623
Sean Wood, CD2	303.550.4165	Christina Johnson, CD7	303.988.1437
Debra Herrera, CD3	970.553.0976	Chad Federwitz, At-Large	970.920.5432
Connie Ring, CD4	719.523.6937	Sen. Nancy Todd	303.866.3432
Jim Collins, CD4	719.383.4844	Sen. Jessie Danielson	303.866.4856
Joe Urban, Past Chair, CD5	719.271.5873		

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State staff

Aging & Adult Services

1575 Sherman Street, 10th Floor, Denver, CO 80203
 303.866.2800, fax 303.866.2696
 Toll free: 1.888.866.4243 (4AGE)

Greg Smith, Interim Director
 303.866.5429 | Greg.smith2@state.co.us

Tara Franck, Administration
 303.866.5288 | tara.franck@state.co.us

FY 2019-20 CCOA meeting schedule

July 18-19, 2019 Parker
 Oct. 3-4, 2019 Montrose
 Nov. 14-15, 2019 Aurora
 Jan. 23-24, 2020 Denver
 March 12-13, 2020Thornton, Arvada
 May 14-15, 2020 Denver
 July 16-17, 2020 Salida