



Commonwealth
Council on Aging

2011 Annual Report

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The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell and Members of the Virginia General Assembly,

The number of Virginians over the age of sixty will increase from 1.4 million (17.8% of population) in 2010 to 2.3 million (23.9%) in 2030, according to projections of the Virginia Employment Commission. Because of this “Age Wave” demographic shift and the challenging economic times, the Council’s purpose – to promote an efficient, coordinated approach by state government to meeting the needs of older Virginians – is more important than ever.

To this end, the Council strongly endorses and supports the work of the Virginia Department for the Aging (VDA) and the twenty-five local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). This network of providers supports older Virginians and their caregivers through services critical to their independence and well-being.

The Council’s two signature initiatives, the “Best Practices Awards” and “Community Conversations on Aging,” and three policy recommendations are presented in this report. The “Best Practices Awards” recognize and encourage the replication of model aging programs that improve the lives of older Virginians. The “Community Conversations on Aging” are listening sessions which inform the policy recommendations.

The first recommendation, “Age Wave” planning for “Livable Communities” (which promote opportunities for people of all ages to carry out their lives when, where, and how they choose) is at the forefront of Council meeting agendas and discussion. Of note, the Council is closely following the work and reports of the Older Dominion Partnership. Their ongoing survey, regarding preparedness for the “Age Wave,” should also identify the issues which matter most to Boomers and Older Adults.

The second recommendation, restoring appropriations to the No Wrong Door (NWD) initiative, will strengthen coordination of services and supports. A public/private partnership, NWD facilitates collaboration between service providers, identification of support options, and the automation of Medicaid eligibility and other key processes to streamline access. NWD also makes it possible for older adults and caregivers to better understand their choices and locate supports through Virginia Easy Access (www.easyaccess.virginia.gov), VirginiaNavigator, and 2-1-1 Virginia.

Thirdly, the Council recommends the protection of funding for home and community based services for vulnerable older adults. These services provide critical supports for older adults to ensure they can remain independent for as long as possible.

As always, do not hesitate to contact Council members directly or to refer constituents.

Sincerely,



Roberto Quinones
Chair 2011-2013



Robert B. Blancato
Chair 2009-2011

Best Practices Awards

The Best Practices Awards, established in 2006, recognize and encourage the replication of model programs, particularly those that foster “Livable Communities” and/or “Home and Community Based Supports.” By honoring such programs, the Council encourages the development of supports that assist older adults to “Age in the Community” and delay or even avoid unwanted institutionalization. This year, the Council recognizes the following programs and provides cash awards thanks to the Rotondaro Family Foundation of Virginia:

1st place: The partnership between Arlington County’s Aging and Disability Services and Culpepper Garden provides affordable services, normally found in assisted living facilities, to older residents of the low-income apartment complex. (\$5000)

2nd place (tie): ElderSpirit Community, of Abingdon, is one of mutual support and late-life spirituality in a mixed-income, co-housing neighborhood consisting of 29 homes, including 16 low-income rentals. (\$1750)

2nd place (tie): Senior Connections, of Richmond, in partnership with AARP, provides individualized assistance to seniors age 60 and over who need help with their monthly bill-paying responsibilities, through their Volunteer Money Management Program. (\$1750)

Honorable Mentions:

- Aging Together, Inc., of Culpeper, for their Caregiver Training Series (\$500)
- Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services Board, for their RSVP & Care-A-Van Driving programs (\$500)
- Mary Washington Healthcare, of Fredericksburg, for their Transition Care Program at the Virginia Heart and Vascular Institute Heart Failure Clinic (\$500)

Community Conversations on Aging

This year, the Council began a series of listening sessions, entitled “Community Conversations on Aging,” in Roanoke, Charlottesville, Newport News, and Woodbridge together attracting over 250 participants. The topics discussed have been used to inform development of the three policy recommendations on the next page. Although there was regional variation, the most frequently discussed topics were housing, services information, and health care. For a complete summary of the topics, please visit www.vda.virginia.gov/council.asp.

- **“Housing”** topics focused on affordability, but also addressed assisted living and home modifications and repairs.
- **“Services Information”** topics included access to, eligibility for, and coordination of home and community based services and supports, as well as the related roles of various state agencies.
- **“Health Care”** topics were most frequently related to Medicare coverage for medications, Medicaid coverage for services, and encouraging healthy living.

In addition to informing the policy recommendations, the “Community Conversations” heighten awareness about the roles and work of the Virginia Department for the Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, and the Council. Plans to continue these “Community Conversations” as regular events throughout each congressional district are underway, with events already scheduled for Chesterfield County and Big Stone Gap.

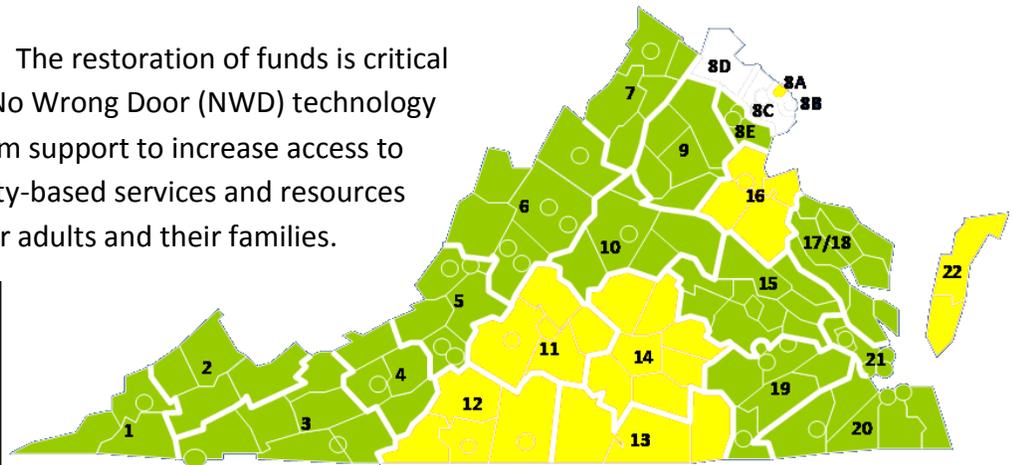
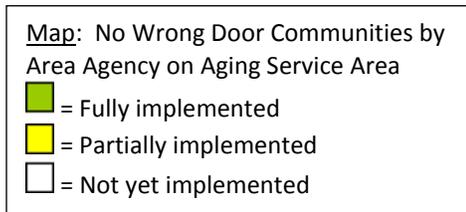
Recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly

The following recommendations are offered in response to needs identified by older Virginians and family caregivers, to support their independence and well-being.



Encourage local and regional age wave planning for Livable Communities. Raise awareness and promote the work of the Blueprint for Livable Communities Citizen Advisory Group by integrating into related conferences such as the Governor’s Housing Conference. Encourage the use of www.vadrs.org/vblc to inform promotion of Livable Communities and highlight best practices in housing, transportation, and community-based supports.

Restore funding for *No Wrong Door*. The restoration of funds is critical as Virginia strives to implement the No Wrong Door (NWD) technology statewide and provide ongoing system support to increase access to the full range of home and community-based services and resources and coordinate supports vital to older adults and their families.



Protect funding for core services provided by the Virginia Department for the Aging and its network of Area Agencies on Aging, DSS Adult Services and Adult Protective Services, Centers for Independent Living, and Medicaid. These services provide assistance for Virginia’s most vulnerable older adults and enhance opportunities for home and community-based living. Examples include: Consumer-Directed Personal Care; Respite Care; Companion Services; Adult Day Health Care and related transportation, all of which avoid or delay institutionalization and prolong valuable support provided by family caregivers.

Relevant Data

Housing: 9.3% of 65+ home owners, and 33% of 65+ renters, report paying at least 50% of their income toward housing, as opposed to 7.4% and 19.7% of all Virginians. (*State Housing Profiles*, AARP Public Policy Institute)

Transportation: A quarter to almost one half of local human services agencies report that the needs of persons who use wheelchairs are unmet and the needs of persons who request “off hours/weekend” transportation (e.g., for shopping, social events, faith-based activities) are entirely unmet. (*United We Ride Inventory*, Department of Rail and Public Transportation)

No Wrong Door: Over the past five fiscal years, more than \$120,000 (16%) has been cut from No Wrong Door. (Virginia Appropriation Acts)

Home and Community Based Services and Medicaid: Over the past five fiscal years, \$2.5 million have been cut from VDA and AAA programs and \$5.25 million from VDSS Adult Services/APS programs directly impacting older adults and family caregivers. (Virginia Appropriation Acts) Older adults comprise 11% of people receiving Medicaid services, and nearly 50% of Medicaid spending on Long-Term Care Services. (*Virginia’s Four Year Plan for Aging Services*) Among all states, Virginia ranks 48th in Medicaid expenditures per capita and 22nd per recipient. (*The Virginia Medicaid Program At A Glance*, Department of Medical Assistance Services)



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

OLDER VIRGINIANS MONTH

WHEREAS, there are currently more than 1 million Virginians age 65 and older and this population will expand to almost 2 million by 2030 when one in every five Virginians will be age 65 and older; and

WHEREAS, since 1963, the month of May has been designated by the U.S. Administration on Aging as America's special time to honor and recognize its older citizens; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme for May is "Older Americans: Connecting the Community" which recognizes the role of older adults in creating and bolstering the fiber of our community, Commonwealth, and nation; and

WHEREAS, older Virginians should be recognized for and encouraged in their efforts to contribute their skills and knowledge to our Commonwealth of Opportunity through civic, community, and social engagement; and

WHEREAS, community colleges and universities, Elderhostel Road Scholar programs, and public libraries have the opportunity to support the life-long learning goals of all our citizens to improve the health and talents of our Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, corporate, non-profit, and public service organizations have the opportunity to support the careers of older Virginians by offering more flexible work arrangements for nearly half of all older adults who are engaged in "bridge" jobs before retiring completely; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's forthcoming Blueprint for Livable Communities initiative and Virginia's Four-Year Plan for Aging Services offer a framework for each of us, our local communities, and the Commonwealth to continue our development across the life course with the support of resources for older adults and caregivers, such as the Area Agencies on Aging and Virginia Easy Access;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert F. McDonnell, do hereby recognize May 2011 as **OLDER VIRGINIANS MONTH** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.




Governor


Secretary of the Commonwealth

Commonwealth Council on Aging 2011 – 2012

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The purpose of the Council shall be to promote an efficient, coordinated approach by state government to meeting the needs of older Virginians. (§ 2.2-2626.A)

<http://www.vda.virginia.gov/council.asp>

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Adult Services Program Manager, Virginia Department of Social Services

Terry A. Smith
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The Virginia Department for the Aging fosters the independence and well-being of older Virginians and supports their caregivers through leadership, advocacy and oversight of state and community programs, and guides the Commonwealth in preparing for an aging population.

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