Post-Event Summary Report

Name of Event: <u>2005 Delaware Governor's Conference on Aging</u>
Date of Event: <u>May 25, 2005</u>
Location of Event: <u>Dover, Delaware</u>
Number of Persons Attending: <u>200</u>
Sponsoring Organization(s): <u>Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities</u>
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Conference Summary

On May 25th, the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) sponsored the 2005 Delaware Governor's Conference on Aging, which focused on preparing for the aging of the baby boom population. The Conference was open to the public and approximately 200 people were in attendance. During the conference, attendees shared opinions, thoughts and suggestions for consideration during the upcoming White House Conference on Aging in Washington.

DSAAPD Director, Allan Zaback; Delaware Health and Social Services Secretary, Vincent Meconi; and Governor Ruth Ann Minner were on hand to open the conference. Governor Minner officially proclaimed May as Older Americans Month in Delaware and also honored Delaware's oldest citizens--our centenarians.

The keynote speaker was Joanna L. Sampson, Special Assistant and Counselor to Secretary for Aging Josefina G. Carbonell. Ms. Sampson spoke about a variety of issues impacting older persons as well as national-level initiatives designed to address these issues.

During the day, conference participants had the opportunity to choose among various sessions to discuss topics and develop recommendations. Topics included: Financial Literacy; End of Life; Built Environment; Ageism; Community/Religious Group Roles; Senior Centers for the Next Generation; Access to Services; and Shortage of Workers. Sessions lasted 90 minutes. At the beginning of each session, participants were presented with background information and discussion questions. Then, following a structured process of brainstorming and information exchange, participants in the sessions reached consensus on two recommendations and discussed related barriers and solutions.

At the conclusion of the conference, the recommendations developed during the eight sessions were presented to the entire group in attendance.

Conference Outcomes

Priority Issue: Financial Literacy

Recommendation 1: Conduct education that encompasses all ages and utilizes all effective resources appropriate to the defined constituency, including but not limited to schools, banks, civil organization, faith based organizations, governmental organizations, and public-private partnerships.

Recommendation 2: Carry out aggressive outreach utilizing incentives and resources including but not limited to government agencies, judicial review, and volunteer organizations.

Barriers	Solutions
• Lack of funding • Transportation and accessibility to workshops • Qualified personnel/volunteers • Language barriers • Literacy levels • Cultural/privacy issues • Apathy/lack of motivation to plan ahead • Corporate America/ "Big Business" may not want to educate society • Politics/Government agencies • Lobbyists	• Grants • Use gambling money • Employer incentives (tax incentives, deferred compensation) • Utilize volunteers • Multiple languages and bi-lingual educators • Mobile outreach • Make education mandatory for elementary, high school and college students (offer college credits) • Offer educational opportunities in the community (community centers) • Form public/private partnerships • Faith based organizations • Replace current legislators • Use funds from corporate fines (penalties) to pay for outreach • Visual pictures/multiple languages • Create a spokesman or "mascot" for outreach

Priority Issue: End of Life

Recommendation 1: Develop a universal brochure to address issues related to planning for end of life transitions and include a specific listing of resources available to help with planning.

Recommendation 2: Conduct education and marketing on end on life issues through continuing medical education, the faith based community, media, computers, annual Social Security statements, and incentives to prepare of end of life decisions.

Barriers	Solutions
• Lack of funding • Logistics • Denial • Self-interest groups • Developing a standardized curriculum	• Leadership • Lottery funds • Tax credits • Lobbying • Collaborations

Priority Issue: Built Environment

Recommendation 1: Work toward the development of coalitions and the education of all stakeholders, and establish financial incentives to builders and housing professionals as well as regulations and legislation to make housing design more senior and disability friendly.

Recommendation 2: Create an environment that is more habitable by making existing housing more accessible; providing housing re-development with more accommodations; increasing the percentage of housing set aside; developing alternative housing; and including adaptive technology.

Barriers	Solutions
• High cost • Lack of legislation • Prohibitive regulations	• Education for consumers, builders, fund providers, legislators • Financial incentives • Form a coalition of all stakeholders • Amend regulations

Priority Issue: Ageism

Recommendation 1: Government agencies should put a new face on aging and counteract ageism through public education; lifelong learning opportunities; using terminology to promote positive images; promoting healthier lifestyles; promoting inclusive communities; and enforcement of laws & policies.

Recommendation 2: Employers should portray the value of older workers, their experience, and longevity in the workplace by offering flexibility; providing training and education over the lifespan; mentoring partnerships; and offering other employment incentives.

Barriers	Solutions
• Lack of funding/allocation of money • Negative media exposure • Government • Lack of education • Organization structure (government and companies) • Lack of knowledge of issues	• Better coordination of fiscal and human resources across life continuum • Partnering with all organizations and stakeholders • More positive media exposure • Increase education • Restructure organization and government to increase opportunities for all workers • Promote issues more effectively • Increase funding

Priority Issue: Community/Religious Group Roles

Recommendation 1: In order to support social engagement, introduce older persons to mentoring, volunteering, local senior center programming and churches by advertising, and through increased transportation programs that are affordable, accessible and flexible.
Recommendation 2: Promote social engagement by training older persons in internet use and providing access to computers (at senior housing, libraries, and senior centers); creating research groups to make seniors aware of internet-related services available; and exploring other technology options for those uncomfortable with the internet.

Barriers	Solutions
• Lack of funding • Transportation (planning, developing, building and operating new systems) • Time needed to do above • Fragmented • Volunteers not readily available • Access to older persons • Agencies reluctant • Keeping equipment updated/maintenance • Lack of computer education and training	• Assess eligibility for services to limit size and scope • Grants • Federal and local funding • Advertising programs • Budget increase to expand transportation availability • Lottery • Flexible workforce/incentives to provide volunteers • Business donations of money or equipment • Volunteers, students, and community groups to provide education or maintain and update equipment

Priority Issue: Senior Centers for the Next Generation

Recommendation 1: Modernize senior center facilities by providing a new name; departing from the image of today's "senior center"; targeting a wider range of ages; offering increased hours of operation; providing a full spectrum of services such as medical, legal, financial, fitness, educational services; and incorporating a continuum of care.
Recommendation 2: Provide diversified programming in senior centers, allowing for multigenerational opportunities for baby boomers who may be caring for aging parents as well as raising their own children, and offering a wide variety of services to accommodate those needs.

Barriers	Solutions
• Lack of funding • Staffing • Recruiting volunteers • Values and attitudes • Facilities (not sharing resources) • Transportation • Image and name • Government funds have age restrictions on grants • Increasing number of seniors • Getting people to "think outside the box" • Fragmented services	• Grants, fundraisers, corporate sponsors, variety of donations • Volunteers • Needs assessment and aggressive marketing • Staff development • Sharing resources with other agencies • Partnerships • Recruiting more volunteers • Adding more clubs/programs for diversity • Changes in federal grant policies • Collaboration and networking

Priority Issue: Access to Services

Recommendation 1: Change the current paradigm for nursing homes from a medical to a social model by making facilities look more like home**;** making them multi-generational, multi-cultural and multi-purpose; bringing the community in; and taking the residents out into the community. Recommendation 2: Advocate for affordable and dependable services for care, including home care, adult daycare**,** senior centers, and respite care.	
Barriers	Solutions
• Lack of funding • Nursing Home Regulations • Lack of community support • Lack of understanding of change	• Increase payments for Medicare beds • Tax incentives • Partner with other organizations • Employer sponsored benefits • Increase funding for National Caregiving Program • Make nursing home regulations more flexible and less punitive • Increase support through education • Advocate for change

Priority Issue: Shortage of Workers

Recommendation 1: Create attractive compensation packages to increase the pool of elder care workers. Recommendation 2: Develop appropriate curricula and accessible training to prepare a workforce able to address the needs of the older population.	
Barriers	Solutions
• Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement levels too low • Competing national priorities • Managed care and insurance companies • Drug companies-media advertising • Systemic barriers of change within education systems • Licensing requirements • Lack of creativity • Malpractice insurance • Lack of trainers • Undesirable job (geriatrics) • Earnings do not offset the cost of education	• Need specific ideas and programs to get funding • "Money follows the person" • For every dollar spent advertising drugs then 50 cents paid for program services • Re-entry program to attract nurses who left the field • Share best practices in education (on-line) • Increase frequency of programs to train medical paraprofessionals • Additional training locations for accessibility • Incentives for universities to offer courses in geriatrics • Training for consumers