



Older Michiganians Day 2008 Legislative Blueprint for Action



Create Choices For Independence

Sponsored by:

Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan,
Michigan Directors of Services to the Aging, Michigan Disability Rights Coalition,
Michigan Senior Advocates Council and the Olmstead Coalition.

Older Michiganians Day 2008

Advocacy Platform



Every hour over ten Michigan residents turn 60 years old. Population projections indicate that the Older Michiganians population will grow by over one million persons between 2000 and 2030. The aging of our population presents us with unprecedented challenges and even greater opportunities. Older citizens contribute so much to our society as seasoned workers, active volunteers, consumers, philanthropists, family members, and unpaid caregivers for children, grandchildren and people with disabilities. They are our history, our collective memory, and our future. And they bring into our state's economy

retirement funds and personal wealth; support local housing markets, health care systems and religious institutions; and fulfill important civic responsibilities.

Michigan legislators, the Governor, consumers, the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, and service providers should work together to adopt and implement policies that make our state a desirable place to live and age-in-place. The recommendations outlined in this Legislative Blueprint for Action are designed to help legislators ensure that Michigan is an "everyone-friendly" state.

STRATEGY 1: SUPPORT LONG TERM LIVING AND CARE OPTIONS

Leverage Federal Medicaid Funds for Long Term Care Options:

- Michigan spends a smaller percentage of its Medicaid budget on long term care compared with other states. Close this gap by increasing the commitment of state funds to match federal dollars and expand and enhance MI Choice and Home Help services, and to support quality improvement initiatives for nursing home care.
- Adopt policies which promote meaningful choices and person-centered solutions that allow the Medicaid long term care benefit to follow the person to the setting of their choice, including their own home, a nursing home, home for the aged, or adult foster care.



Increase State-Funded Home and Community-Based Options:

- Michigan's support for non-Medicaid services through the Older Michiganians Act has languished by a 20-30% drop in purchasing power over the past 10 years. Close this gap by supporting Area Agencies on Aging, mandated by federal law to plan, develop, and provide access to a network of community based providers, to ensure access to a variety of consumer directed and person-centered home and community-based services separate from the Medicaid system, and essential to long term living.
- Michigan's aging network leverages \$3 for every \$1 of state funding from consumer cost sharing, voluntary contributions, local matching funds, private donations, and other sources. Increase state funding for home and community-based services to leverage additional

funds, increase needed services, and benefit from the ensuing job creation.

Healthy Living Options:

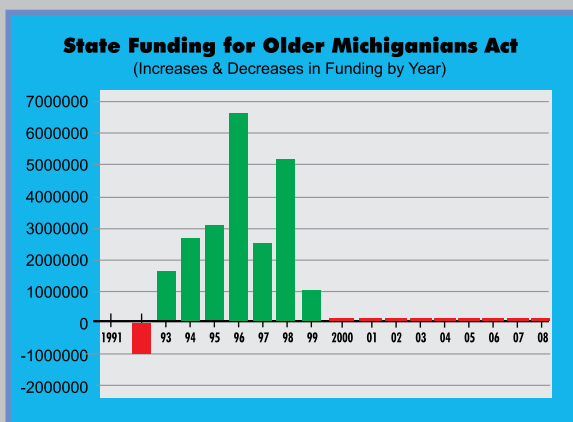
- Support the growth of evidenced-based programs that are effective in maintaining the highest level of functioning for persons with disabling chronic conditions and preventing the onset and debilitating consequences of chronic conditions by increasing healthy behaviors, fitness, and health literacy.

Caregiver Support:

- Support caregivers because 80% of the assistance received by disabled elders is delivered by unpaid family caregivers, at a cash value of \$10.5 billion in Michigan. Caregivers need essential home and community-based services like respite and adult day-care to persevere and avoid burnout.

Legislative Call to Action

1. Create a single line item for Medicaid long term care funding that allows the Michigan Department of Community Health to support services that consumers need in accordance with principles of money follows the person.
2. Increase Medicaid and state-funded Home and Community Based long term care funding to address projected needs and dedicate more funding to support these options.
3. Support estate preservation as a way to generate revenue for long term care services and to encourage citizens to plan for their long term care needs and protect their homes.
4. Support Area Agencies on Aging and their work with senior centers and other aging service providers to expand evidence-based older adult wellness, fitness, education, and healthy living programs.
5. Reduce wait lists for the continuum of respite and other supportive services including adult day care centers, in home respite, caregiver training, counseling, and extended respite options, through increased funding for burdened family caregivers who cannot afford the full cost of care at private market rates.
6. Support continuation funding for the Single Point of Entry (SPE) demonstration project established in Public Act 634 of 2006, including the assurance that consumers are served in a timely, consistent and quality manner and the SPEs are working towards increasing coordination of local effort and efficiencies.





STRATEGY 2: PROMOTE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

Livable Communities for All Ages Community Development:

- Support development that links local government and economic planning with local aging leaders to assure local initiatives are developed with Aging-in-Community principles.

Affordable Housing Options:

- Support affordable housing for older adults by working with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to target Medicaid-eligible and vulnerable older adult populations as needed to assure older adults receive a fair share of Section 8 Rental Assistance vouchers.
- Create affordable housing and assisted living for older adults by directing MSHDA to assure adequate housing options are available in rural areas by supporting small scale developments.
- Create incentives for public and private community development that supports universal design.

Enhanced Mobility Options:

- Support the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee recommendations to reduce older adult crash rates by expanding investments in alternative public transit and mobility options such as small bus curb-to-curb and door-to-door service and ageless road design.

Access to Health Care Options:

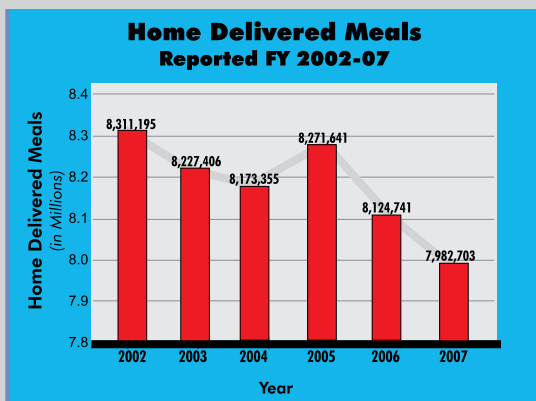
- Support access to affordable health insurance options by adopting policies that provide economic incentives for individuals to obtain health and long term care insurance.
- Ensure that employer/employee paid health benefits for retirees are not reduced or eliminated and that retirees have meaningful input into any changes to their benefit packages.

Protection from Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation:

- Support legislation to implement recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Elder Abuse that provide greater protection to vulnerable older adults from elder abuse and financial exploitation.

Legislative Call to Action

1. Ensure livable community concepts¹ are used for private and state-funded housing, transportation, mobility, and economic development projects.
2. Work with MSHDA to change its eligibility rules so that MI Choice consumers will qualify for Section 8 Rental Assistance vouchers.
3. Allow MSHDA and local public housing authorities to give priority status for Section 8 Rental Assistance vouchers for people in nursing homes wanting to move back to the community.



4. Adopt legislation creating tax-incentives to encourage the purchase of long term care insurance policies.
5. Support the ballot proposal requiring the Legislature to control the skyrocketing cost of health care and provide health care to the 1.1 million Michiganders without health insurance.
6. Support provisions of the House Elder Abuse package of bills, which enhance protections for vulnerable older adults from abuse and financial exploitation.

Footnote: ¹Livable Communities concepts are identified in the Michigan Community for a Lifetime Elder Friendly Community Assessment developed by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging and Michigan State University Extension



What Seniors and Advocates Can Do

Understand the issues and be prepared to advocate for the Legislative Blueprint for Action at the rally or call in or email your legislators on June 11, 2008 if you can't be in Lansing.

BEFORE

- Participate in a local Older Michigianians Day 2008 event.
- Review the Legislative Blueprint for Action.
- Study senators' and representatives' stand on related issues.
- Identify issues related to the platform that need attention.
- Prepare strategies for engaging the legislators in support of the platform.

DURING

- Attend the rally in Lansing.
- Participate in meetings with state senators and representatives.
- Advocate for the Legislative Blueprint for Action.
- Observe legislative sessions in process, if feasible.
- Prepare strategies for engaging the legislators to support the platform.

AFTER

- Continue to strengthen and develop relationships with the legislators.
- Follow up with state representative regarding the platform after the event.
- Maintain ongoing relationships.
- Keep your senators and representatives informed about local issues impacting older persons, retirees and baby boomers.
- Encourage other seniors and advocacy groups to stay engaged.

What Legislators Can Do

Be prepared to welcome seniors, caregivers and advocates who travel to Lansing the day of the event.

BEFORE

- Review the Older Michigianians Day Legislative Blueprint for Action and identify issues that you can support.
- Discuss possible alliances with other legislators who have the same interest.
- Have your staff to obtain answers to any issues that you may have.
- Participate in local pre-Older Michigianians Day events with constituents.
- Sponsor legislation to support the Legislative Blueprint for Action.

DURING

- Set aside time on June 11, 2008 to meet with constituents in Lansing.
- Consider coordinating meetings with other senators or representatives in senatorial district.
- Schedule committee hearings on senior legislation.
- Schedule senior legislation for action on the floor.

AFTER

- Follow up with local advocates.
- Adopt legislation that addresses community needs.
- Recognize the wealth of knowledge, experience and benefits to the economy that older persons bring to Michigan.
- Support legislation that address the future need of baby boomers.
- Meet with senior advocates at the district-level to stay abreast of issues.

"Government and Baby Boomers have to plan for the Age Wave"

Baby boomers need to re-think retirement...Saving for retirement should become the law.

*Kenneth Dychtwald, Ph.D.,
Riding the Age Wave Forum, 2007*



Every hour over ten Michigan residents turn 60 years old.

"Older Michiganians and Aging Baby Boomers are good for the economy"

They import retirement income and personal wealth; are health care and leisure consumers; and are volunteers and philanthropists!

*James McGuire,
Senior Advocate*

"Get Ready for the Aging and Growth of the Baby Boomers"

The baby boomer population, richer than average, will be demanding the best in pharmaceuticals, medical devices and diagnostics, retirement villages, and age-friendly communications equipment. Michigan is well-suited to spawn job leaders in these areas.

*David Littman,
Michigan Economic Forecast 2008*

Growth of the Baby Boomers

About 1.7 million older persons age 60 years and over account for 17.1% of the State of Michigan's population. By 2030, this population will grow by more than a million people. *(U.S. Census Bureau)*

Retirement & Earned Income

Over one million (1,080,866) households with persons 60 years and over earn income (39.9%) or Social Security (82.2%) that is primarily spent in the Michigan economy. About 20.6% of persons age 60 years and over are still in the labor force. *(U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2006)*

Caregiving

Services provided by family caregivers are valued at \$10 billion, more than five times the combined spending on home and nursing home care. A significant number of these Michigan caregivers are older persons. *(National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, 1997)*

