



My Turn: Larke Recchie

The Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging strives to bring you current and relevant news that makes sense of aging policy. This electronic communication is our latest endeavor. Why risk information overload with another newsletter? Because OAAAA has a unique statewide perspective on policy developments. In each issue, we will analyze legislation that affects aging services, or we may issue a call to action when advocates must make their voices heard.

Area agencies on aging have helped put aging issues in the spotlight in recent months. They helped develop the state's solution to funding long-term care – the Unified Long-Term Care System. Ohio's tight budget has focused attention on the AAAs' ability to offer cost-effective services that older adults prefer.

The strain on state Medicaid resources creates new opportunities to shape policy on behalf of older Ohioans. Right now, for example, bipartisan support is building for enhancement of Home First legislation to allow more vulnerable adults immediate access to home and community care, even when there are waiting lists for these services. Home First helps seniors live independently and at no additional cost to taxpayers.

Despite bipartisan support, passage of Home First is not a given. To improve the lives of older adults, advocates must present a unified front. The Ohio Aging Network Coalition, composed of 11 statewide organizations, was formed in 2008 to work together on a common aging agenda, including a long-term care system that offers choices of care that all Ohioans can afford. Please plan to join us at the OAAAA Spring Conference on March 23-24 at the Hyatt on Capitol Square in Columbus where we will talk policies and politics and health reform. The Ohio Aging Network Coalition will have a legislative reception in the Statehouse Crypt on March 23 from 5:00-6:30 p.m.

We will report on our progress in the pages of this newsletter.

I hope you will find useful information in our first newsletter. Please write me at recchie@ohioaging.org to let me know what stories you would like to see in future issues.