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Silverwire

Vol. 4, No. 2 Spring/Summer 2006

NEWSLETTER OF THE UMAINE CENTER ON AGING

National Advisory Committee on Rural Health & Human Services Plans Summer Visit to Maine

The National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services (NACRHHS) will be holding its 53rd Meeting in Camden, Maine from June 11-13, 2006. The Committee advises the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on issues that affect rural communities. Field meetings, such as this one in Camden, are an integral part of the Committee's ongoing work. The visit to Maine is being hosted by the UMaine Center on Aging and its director, Dr. Lenard Kaye, who is a member of the NACRHHS.

Each year, the Committee holds two of its three meetings in rural communities. The meetings provide an opportunity for the Committee to gather information for its annual report from rural providers and citizens. The 2007 report will focus on three key issues: Medicare Advantage in rural communities, Head Start in rural areas and substance abuse in rural areas.

The meeting will begin on Sunday, June 11th at 1:30 p.m. and conclude on Tuesday, June 13th at 11:00 a.m. The primary portions of the meeting will take place at the Camden

Opera House. The meeting is open to the general public and there will be opportunity for public comment at the conclusion of each day of the three day meeting.

Scheduled speakers presenting testimony include: Richard Barringer, Research Professor, Planning, Development and Environment, University of Southern Maine; Kimberly Johnson, Director, Maine Office of Substance Abuse; David Hartley, Director, Maine Rural Health Research Center, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine; Stephen Gilson, Professor, Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies, University of Maine; Deborah Totten, Assistant Director, Action for Older Persons, Inc.; Carolyn Drugge, Director, Maine Office of Child Care and Head Start; and George Siriotis and Laura Schuntermann, Anthem.

Two field site visits have been scheduled: the first with the Bucksport Community Health Advisory Committee in Bucksport, ME hosted by Mary Jane Bush, Health Planning Director to discuss issues

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Five New Grants Mark CoA's Strong Start in '06

Recent news of five new grant funded projects in which the Center on Aging will be involved marks a strong start to the year. In December, the Center on Aging, along with partners at Eastern Maine Healthcare and the Eastern Maine Transportation Collaborative (EMTC) were notified of a \$97,776 grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation to bolster awareness of transportation options and transportation assistance to vulnerable popu-

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The Center on Aging is an interdisciplinary research center reporting to the Vice President for Research and associated with the University of Maine's School of Social Work and the College of Business, Public Policy, and Health. Our mission is to promote and facilitate activities on aging in the areas of education, research and evaluation, and community service, in order to maximize the quality of life of older citizens and their families in Maine and beyond.

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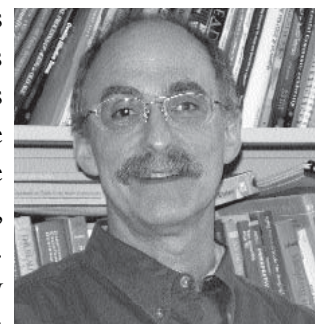
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From the Director

The fast approaching meeting in June of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services in Camden underscores, once again, the important role that the state of Maine can and does play in illustrating both the serious challenges and innovative solutions to living the good life in rural America. We have a superb opportunity during the course of the Committee's visit to share with experts from around the United States and federal government officials our unique experiences in dealing with a wide range of issues that transcend the agendas of particular special interest groups (including the aging network) in terms of the implications and impact they have for both our local communities and the nation – those topics being, in this case, Medicare, substance abuse and Head Start. We have, as well, a prime opportunity during the course of their deliberations to illustrate our enduring capacity to work together, across sectors and organizations, in attacking the perplexing health and social welfare issues of the day. The program of diverse speakers and illustrative field visits that has been organized during the course of their fact gathering mission succeeds, I believe, in reflecting the full engagement of stakeholders representing the local community, state government and higher education. The planning committee that worked with the federal staff in developing the three day program of activities reflects this very melding of diverse perspectives. I extend sincere thanks to fellow planning committee members, David Hartley, Matt Chandler, and Wayne Meyers, for their expert help in developing the program and recognize as well the strong guidance and support offered by Tom Morris and Phuong Lu in the Office of Rural Health Policy of HRSA and the meeting arrangements support staff at McKing Consulting. I feel confident that our excellent teamwork has resulted in the development of a rich and informative program that will, once again, insure that the state of Maine is able to contribute in significant fashion to the discourse on maximizing quality of life in rural America.



Lenard W. Kaye

I close by recognizing that the transition from academic year operations to summer session activities has commenced. I want to bid farewell to our hard-working team of graduate field interns and graduate research assistants placed in the Geriatric Practicum Partnership Program and the Center on Aging itself. Thanks also to the efforts of our undergraduate work-study students. Taken together they have, once again, illustrated the satisfaction and reward that accompanies our commitment at the Center to student education and training. Student engagement at both the undergraduate and graduate levels will continue to be a hallmark philosophy in our work.

Partnerships and Programs.....

SENIOR SENSE VISTA: PAUL MATULIS

Nationally, the average age of an AmeriCorps*VISTA member is 23-24 years old. Since the first volunteers joined the Senior Sense program in January 2004, 42% of our members have been 50 years of age or older compared to 23% in their 20s.



Paul Matulis, Senior Sense Vista Member

These older adults are on the leading edge of a change in our culture.

More and more

older adults are choosing to make a commitment to community service. Recently the Corporation for National and Community Service developed a recruitment campaign specifically targeting older adults. Senior Sense A*VISTA member Paul Matulis is a great example of the changing face of community service in America.

Paul joined in August 2005 and has been working at the Penquis Community Action Program to develop a TRIAD program in the Piscataquis County region. The goal of TRIAD is to bring senior citizens, law enforcement professionals, and social service agencies together to fight fraud and abuse aimed at older adults. They aim to educate seniors to defend themselves against scams, make law enforcement more “user friendly”, and connect seniors to

services which can make their lives more safe and secure. This TRIAD is the newest in the state of Maine and the first organization of its kind to serve the large population of senior citizens living in and around the very rural Piscataquis County.

We are proud of Paul and all of our A*VISTA members. They have made an incredible contribution to Maine’s elders through their commitment and efforts.

CoA to Co-sponsor Mental Health and Substance Abuse Summit for Grandfamilies

On May 31st Families and Children Together (FACT) and the CoA Relatives as Parents Project will be co-sponsoring a summit for Maine's grandfamilies featuring Dr. Joseph Crumbley a well-known expert in the field of kinship caregiving. The summit will run from 9:00-4:30pm divided into two sessions. The morning session is open to everyone: policy makers; social service, mental health, and child welfare professionals (both administrators and direct care staff); and grandparents, aunts, uncles and other people who are parenting relatives' children. The afternoon session is for professionals who want to continue with more in depth training. This should prove to be an exciting and informative opportunity for grandfamilies and professionals. For more information contact FACT by phone: (207) 941-2347 or email: dmcgraw@familiesandchildren.org.

RSVP Names New Director



CoA welcomes Paula Burnett as RSVP Program Director

Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Penobscot and Piscataquis counties announces its new director, Paula

Burnett. Burnett brings with her twenty years of experience as a professional administrator and educator, including seven years of experience as a program coordinator within RSVP. It is her dedication to RSVP, as well as her enthusiasm for volunteering, that will serve her well in her service to both the volunteers and their communities.

Burnett displays a spirit of both commitment and caring in her work. She will continue to provide support to Louise Bonawitz, the Center’s Health & Fitness Consultant and our successful Bone Builders program, assisting our current sites, and searching out new sites and opportunities. Chevelle Marshall, our RSVP Program Coordinator, will be working side by side with Paula all along the way. Paula and Chevelle will be joined by Sharon Carter who comes on board in May as Program Coordinator for Washington and Hancock Counties.

Continued from front page

lations including low-income older adults and people with disabilities. This grant will allow the EMTC to implement recommendations from the 2005 EMTC Health Services Initiative research spearheaded by the CoA. For this project, the Center on Aging will serve in an evaluator role examining the effectiveness of transportation screening that will be piloted at the Health Access Network in Lincoln. The Center will also formulate a strategic public awareness campaign to increase knowledge and subsequent usage of public transportation resources in the Eastern Maine region. As part of this exciting project, the CoA Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) will be leading the creation of a novel bus buddy program that will encourage older adult ridership on the Bangor Area Transit (BAT) bus.

The CoA will continue its Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) through a two-year grant award of \$10,000 from the Brookdale Foundation. This grant will allow the Center to enhance and expand our Relatives as Parents Program efforts. Over the course of the grant, CoA will provide online caregiver education under the coordination of Online Education Consultant, Lauren Storck, Ph.D. while our partners at Health Access Network expand caregiver support services to this underserved population in the Lincoln area. (For more detail on the project, see page 7)

Through a one year, \$100,000 grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation, the Center will

coordinate education efforts to professionals who provide discharge planning and admissions coordination for patients through the Transitions with Care project. Transitions with Care is a project created and facilitated by the Lubec Regional Medical Center that aims to improve the transitional care provided to Maine's vulnerable populations including older adults.

In continuing our close connection with the Health Access Network (HAN), CoA will conduct needs assessment research and evaluation of their new Rural Maine Healthy Aging Project. This is a three year, geriatric mental health services project. Proposed activities include expanded case management with a geriatric focus, vigorous community outreach and education, improved preventive care and screenings, and the promotion of student education in rural geriatrics. The grant includes a consortium of partners and will be administered by HAN. The partners include Penobscot Valley Hospital, Millinocket Regional, University of New England, and University of Maine. This project has been established through a \$300,000 grant award to the Health Access Network in northern Penobscot county from the US Dept of Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration.

The Center is also pleased to announce a new partnership with Global Wellness Inc. Through a \$12,000 U.S. Administration on Small Business grant, the CoA will create a marketing survey and evaluation protocol for a retirement and wellness planning product to be developed by Global Wellness.

All of these grants demonstrate the breadth of CoA partnerships as well as the range of aging topics and issues of concern currently being investigated.

CoA & School of Social Work Host Successful Legal Colloquium

As part of the Geriatric Practicum Partnership grant, the University of Maine Center on Aging and School of Social Work hosted a colloquium on March 24 entitled "A Conversation Among Lawyers and Social Workers." The event was held at the Buchanan Alumni House on campus drawing a crowd of nearly 100 attendees. Mary Kellogg, a Bangor attorney and MSW student at the Center on Aging took the lead in planning the event.

Because optimal teamwork is essential among professionals working with older adults, the goal of the colloquium was to begin a dialogue among social workers and lawyers to enable social workers to better understand legal issues faced

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Mary Kellogg (far left) and legal panel members address GPPP colloquium attendees

Spotlight on Productive Aging: Kay Lebowitz a Committed Volunteer



Kay Lebowitz reminds us of the importance of voluntarism

Kay Lebowitz graduated from high school at 15 and never looked back. Jobs came easily and she always asked for the more complicated work. The only time she was turned down for a job was when she tried to enlist in the military at the beginning of WWII. The enlistment officer quietly ushered her out the back door with the admonition that there was no room for a “daisy” in the military services.

Kay is highly visible in the community and it is no wonder. After spending 17 years working in the Federal District Court, she spent 10 years as a State House Representative. When she moved back to Maine she wanted to get connected with the community, so she volunteered to be a prompter at the theater. Eventually she became the producer of numerous theatrical events which resulted in establishing close connections for her throughout the region. Volunteering started in earnest for Kay in 1993. She currently sits on numerous committees and boards.

Kay left her last job as a House Representative because she determined "it was time to give the job to someone else." She felt the position needed a different perspective. This approach is typical of her style in volunteering. Kay likes to get involved, meet the players, offer her support and input, work hard for a number of years, and then leave the position for someone else to fill. She finds the process enriching.

When asked what she considers productive aging, she says, “Stay busy and keep moving”. The speed of her gait exemplifies her style. Everyone gets some exercise when they follow Kay. Couple her energy with a unique panache and she stands out in any crowd.

by older adults and to examine the perspective each profession brings to a given situation. Attorneys Ray Bradford, Robert Lingley, Leigh McCarthy, Jane Skelton, and Julie Mallett, and social worker Martha Higgins of the Office of Elder Services spoke about a wide range of issues, including the attorney-client relationship, access to legal services, guardianship, elder exploitation, elder law, and estate planning.

Due to the great success and interest in this topic, the Center on Aging hopes to sponsor another colloquium in the future to continue the dialogue and to provide

an opportunity for in-depth conversation on legal topics. Planning for the next GPPP Colloquium Series is currently underway and will take place during the 2006-2007 academic year. All GPPP colloquium events are posted to our website: www.mainecenteronaging.org.



Panelists addressed a packed audience of nearly 100 professionals.



Marjie Harris (far right), GPPP Coordinator and CoA students were on hand to staff the registration table.

Older Adult Alcohol Abuse Needs, Resources, and Readiness Assessment Analysis Underway

The University of Maine Center on Aging has contracted with the Office of Substance Abuse to conduct a needs, resource and readiness assessment of older adult drinking in Hancock County. Prior research conducted by Eastern Maine Healthcare found that older adults living in that region of Maine were nearly five times more likely than their peers living in other regions of the state to report chronic alcohol consumption in the prior 30 day period. The Maine Joint Advisory Committee on Selected Services for Older Persons (JACSSOP) released a report in January of 2000 that highlighted the need for substance abuse programs specifically funded for elders. CoA assessment research is gathering in depth data about alcohol abuse among Maine's older population. The findings of this project will serve as a tool for professionals designing culturally sensitive and appropriate prevention campaigns to better serve the needs of older adults throughout the state of Maine.

A total of twelve focus groups were facilitated within four Hancock County communities—Bucksport, Blue Hill, Ellsworth, and Mount Desert Island. The focus group protocol targeted three specific stakeholder groups —older adults, caregivers of older adults, and health care/social service professionals. The preliminary analysis of the data collected during the focus groups revealed consistency in perceptions across all three stakeholder groups with regards to the primary factors that influence older adult drinking patterns including isolation, grief and loss, changes in health status, and lack of events that encourage socialization without alcohol.

In addition to focus group findings, over 200 surveys were received from counseling and substance abuse professionals across the state providing information on perceived needs that surround this issue and Maine's current resources for addressing the problem. To complement this information, key informant interviews are currently underway with individuals and community members in Hancock County and statewide. Key informant interviews provide an in-depth glimpse into this problem through the lens of community members, social workers, healthcare professionals, and other key individuals. CoA will also conduct a secondary analysis on data currently being collected and maintained by hospitals in Hancock County and various state agencies. The analysis will review hospital admissions records, crime statistics, and substance abuse treatment data to gain a better understanding of the nature of older adult alcohol abuse in general, and how it relates to the state and other rural areas. Preliminary results will be presented to the public at the Bar Harbor Rural Geriatric Conference held on June 1st and 2nd.

16th Annual Rural Geriatric Conference Aging in Rural Maine: Integrating Policy and Practice June 1 and 2, 2006 Bar Harbor, Maine



Don't miss these 2 days of expert-led continuing education workshops and networking opportunities with colleagues in the field of aging. Topics include: ageism in gay culture and caring for GLBTI elders; alcohol abuse among older adults; geriatric competencies; health care cost, access and quality; hospice care for persons with dementia; pain management; the experience of being a nursing home resident; spirituality and individual expression; and much more!

For information call (207) 622-7566, ext. 202 or e-mail conferences@mcd.org.

An on-line brochure is available at: <http://www.mcd.org/domestic/training.htm>
and registration materials are available at: <https://www.mcd.org/registration/geriatric06.asp>

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surrounding substance abuse; and the second to address Head Start with Head Start and Children and Family Opportunities of Washington & Hancock Counties, in Ellsworth, ME to be hosted by Jeanie Mills, Executive Director.

Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems (EMHS) has generously agreed to sponsor a special reception for NACRHHS members, federal staff, and honored guests at Beau Chemin Farm, the home of Wayne and JoAnn Myers. EMHS is the regional healthcare system serving all of central, eastern, and northern Maine with many of its services directed at meeting the needs of citizens residing in the most rural regions of the state.

The National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services is a 21-member citizens' panel of nationally recognized experts which was chartered in 1987 to advise the Secretary of Health and Human Services on ways to address health care problems in rural America. Chaired by former South Carolina Governor David Beasley, the committee's private and public-sector members reflect wide-ranging, first-hand experience with rural issues -- in medicine, nursing, administration, finance, law, research, business, and public health.

For more information about the NACRHHS, please visit: <http://ruralcommittee.hrsa.gov/> The 2006 Annual Report of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services has recently

been published. It is available online at: <ftp://ftp.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/NAC06forweb.pdf>.

RAPP Receives Third Grant

A \$10,000 two-year grant, awarded by the Brookdale Foundation of New York, will extend support for grandparents raising grandchildren into Northern Penobscot and Southern Aroostook Counties. Through a partnership with The Health Access Network, a Federally Qualified Health Center in the Lincoln/ Millinocket area, several new services will be available to benefit kinship families. An innovative voucher program will enable children to access community recreation programs while providing respite services to caregivers. Other highlights include a new grandparent support group, educational online seminars and tip sheets for caregivers, and a conference on legal issues. The Center's two prior RAPP grants were funded through Generations United in Washington, DC.

Blaine House Conference on Aging Scheduled

Governor Baldacci has announced plans to hold a Blaine House Conference on Aging at the Augusta Civic Center on September 21, 2006. Delegates to the conference will be chosen at regional meetings organized by the five Area Agencies on Aging. The Conference will be an opportunity for delegates to address some of the most important issues facing people in Maine as they age. For more information, contact your local Area Agency on Aging.

ONLINE EDUCATION RECEIVES EXCELLENT RATINGS

The Center on Aging successfully delivered its first season of the Online Continuing Professional Education Program on rural aging topics. Two initial e-workshops, in January and March 2006, enjoyed high participation rates and excellent ratings from participants across the country.

Using email communications and internet distribution of learning materials in an interactive format allows the presenter to reply to individual participant questions. E-workshops provide convenient learning for participants who are unable to attend in-person and simplifies peer support and exchange of information online. This winter's program was open to healthcare and social service providers at no cost.

A second sequence of e-workshops is under development. Updated information on the e-workshops can be found on the Center's website: www.mainecenteronaging.org.



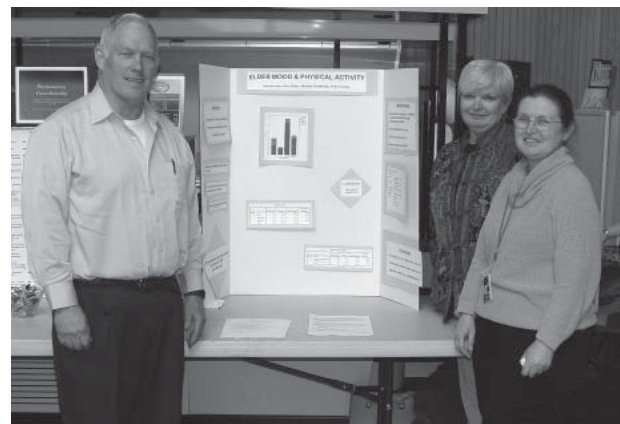


Student Poster Presentations Showcase Aging Research

CoA students were among the many graduate students who participated in the University of Maine College of Business, Public Policy, and Health Graduate Student Research Expo held on April 26, 2006. This expo highlighted numerous year-long projects completed by graduate student teams in the college including student research on aging topics.



From left to right: Anne Buckvold, CoA GPPP student, Susan Wengrzynek, CoA GPPP student, Jason Charland, CoA Graduate Research Assistant, and Troy Townsend (group member Michelle Brown is missing) stand beside their research poster on older adult perception and use of Interactive Voice Recorded (IVR) phone systems.



From left to right: Ken Gates, CoA Field Intern, Anita Cooley (back), and Wanda Chadwick display their research poster on older adult physical activity and its effects on mood and well-being.