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University of Maine News

Assistant Secretary for Aging to Announce Grants at UMaine on Oct. 18

Oct. 13, 2002

Media contact: Joe Carr at (207) 581-3571

ORONO -- Josefina G. Carbonell, assistant secretary for Aging in the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, will be at the University of Maine on Friday Oct. 18 to announce three grants to be used for the development of a National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Action Plan. The UMaine Center on Aging, in conjunction with the Maine Center for Osteoporosis Research and Education in Bangor, will receive one of those grants.

Carbonell will make the announcement at a news conference scheduled for 10 a.m. in the Treat Room of Buchanan Alumni House on College Ave. Prof. Lenard Kaye of the UMaine School of Social Work, the director of the Center on Aging, will also speak at the news conference, as will Dr. Clifford Rosen, director of the Maine Center for Osteoporosis Research and Education. Kaye and Rosen are co-principal investigators on the one-year, \$138,000 grant.

The other grant recipients are the National Osteoporosis Foundation in Washington D.C. and the Foundation for Osteoporosis Research and Education located in Oakland, California.

Osteoporosis affects approximately ten million people in the United States, mostly women. The National Institutes of Health estimated in 2001 that costs related to the disease, manifested by the loss of bone mass, at \$47 million per day. Kaye and Rosen will lead an effort to develop a strategy and plan that will raise knowledge about osteoporosis and its prevention.

Dr. Kaye points out that "by bringing together the best minds on aging and osteoporosis and talking with diverse groups of older women throughout the United States this project is intent on not just educating the public about the the risk of osteoporosis but actually bringing about reductions in risk-taking behavior. If successful, such a campaign will ultimately reduce the frequency of diagnoses of osteoporosis in the older female population. Central to our efforts will be our 'whole person' philosophy of osteoporosis education that emphasizes the importance of open communication between women and their health care providers, personal empowerment and responsibility, and education that targets underserved older women in those regions of the nation where health information is most scarce."

The project will be conducted in several stages and will include a review of current and previous osteoporosis education efforts; interviews with focus groups in various locations around the U.S.; meetings with those who operate osteoporosis education programs in various regions of the country; and developing, testing and refining an action plan.

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The University of Maine, Orono, Maine 04469
207-581-1110
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