

## ELDER OPTIONS

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 19% of elderly men live alone, but 40% of elderly women live alone.
- At the last census, Older Floridian's per capita income was 25% higher than those age 18-49.
- Between 2001 and 2029, baby boomers will reach retirement age once every eight seconds.

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# Aging Resource Center News

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2009

## Elder Options Launches E-Newsletter

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Aging Resource Center News*. In an effort to keep other professionals in the aging network and seniors themselves informed of the latest news and information in the Aging Resource Center, we will be producing a quarterly newsletter sent via e-mail to all those who would like to receive it.

In this issue, we will focus on some of the important stories and events currently impacting our agency and the aging network of Mid-Florida. As we expand and refine our outreach, we hope to establish some permanent articles such as the Medicaid Q&A section, where readers can submit a Medicaid question that can be answered in the fol-



lowing issue by a Medicaid expert; and an event calendar that will detail the senior-related events in our area that may be of interest to you. Additionally, in future issues we hope to spotlight each of our lead agencies in the community and give readers a glimpse into each of their unique operations.

In a world of shrinking budgets

## Grant Money Creates Senior Centers

Two recent rounds of grants and land donations are helping to establish senior centers that will be excellent resources to elders in our area.

In March 2008, Citrus County was awarded \$240,338 for the construction of an outdoor patio space, which will be utilized for senior meals and an exercise room. Suwannee River Economic Council was awarded \$245,847 per center for the construction of 3 new senior facilities in Dixie, Gilchrist, and Union counties on land donated by the local government. Groundbreaking for these three centers has occurred in the last several weeks.

In November 2008, 4 additional projects were awarded funding, including a \$2,000,000 grant to the City of Gainesville and ElderCare of Alachua County for the construction of a new senior recreation center to be located on city-owned property near Northside Park. ElderCare will utilize the new facility as the base of senior services in Alachua County.

Also in November, Citrus County received additional funding towards a café in their Community Resource Center in Lecanto, which will serve as a meal site to seniors and be available to

and forests, the Aging Resource Center News will be an online venture only. If you feel that another person or agency would benefit from this type of information, please feel free to forward this on so that they may enroll in the mailing list.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, or have comments or suggestions for future content, please contact the Elder Options Medicaid Outreach Coordinator, Jeff Whitley, at [whitleyj@agingresources.org](mailto:whitleyj@agingresources.org).



cater functions; and Bradford County was awarded \$500,000 for the construction of a new senior center in Starke.

Finally, the Florida Institute of Workforce Innovation received \$343,245 to create a senior center in Melrose. They are currently working with a local architect who specializes in Florida-style architecture, and hope to host activities that will draw elders from the surrounding communities.

Each of these facilities will be wonderful resources to the area community of senior citizens.

## Honoring Their Service



Executive Director Kristen Longmore and Board Member Ms. Marjorie Driggers

*"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."*

—Abraham Lincoln



To recognize years of faithful service on the Board of Directors and Advisory Council, Elder Options enacted a new tradition of honoring board members with plaques commemorating years of service milestones at the March board meeting. Future awards will be given at intervals of five years of service.

The initial award recipients and their combined years of service were:

Ms. Marjorie Driggers – 26 years  
 Dr. Beatrice Braun – 17 years  
 Mr. Isaac Chandler – 16 years  
 Ms. Jana Hart – 10 years  
 Ms. Jean Euler – 8 years  
 Ms. Alida Langley – 8 years  
 Ms. Lavon Harkins – 5 years

Not in attendance were Mr. Charles Miller, and Mr. Lee Johnson, who will receive their awards at the next board meeting.

The entire staff of Elder Op-

tions wishes to thank these dedicated individuals for their devotion to both our agency and to the well-being of seniors in our Planning and Service Area. Their commitment to serve as advocates for seniors in our area and as leadership for our agency is a shining example to all of us in the aging network and service community.

## Elder Options Expands Outreach to Television

In an effort to reach more seniors, especially those seniors in rural areas who are not familiar with senior services or aging resources, Elder Options will begin a television advertising campaign for the months of March and April.

The advertisements, aimed at both needy seniors and recent retirees, will focus on the Aging Resource Center and en-

courage seniors and their caregivers to utilize the Elder Helpline to obtain more information about services and programs such as Medicaid that may be available to them.

Look for the advertisements on WCJB TV20 and Cox Cable throughout March and April.



## Community Partners Making a Difference

Elder Options is proud to announce its partnership with the Department of Children and Families.

Elder Options had noticed that callers to the Elder Helpline (1-800-96-ELDER) were reluctant to apply for food stamps or other Medicaid benefits because the thought of applying online or via a call center was too daunting for many seniors. DCF also noticed that although the number of overall

Medicaid applications has increased, the number of seniors applying was actually decreasing.

To help resolve this issue, DCF and Elder Options have teamed up in a state cost-sharing initiative. Elder Options provides space and computer equipment, while DCF provides 20-30 hours per week of dedicated staff time. Personnel pay is divided between the two agencies.

Both agencies are proud of this partnership, and as of Sept. 2008, over 1,000 seniors were referred to a DCF worker for assistance with food stamps, Medicaid, and Medicare benefits. The initiative is currently only funded through June 2009, but both DCF and Elder Options hope that additional funds will be available to continue to support this new, innovative partnership.

# Medicaid Q&A: Medicaid can pay for Medicare?



For the initial Medicaid Q&A, our question will relate to one of the most frequently asked

questions regarding Medicaid programs geared to seniors—"Is assistance available to pay my monthly Medicare premium of \$96.40?"

Good news: for certain senior citizens, the answer is yes.

The Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program (QMB) is a Medicaid program that covers the Medicare cost-sharing requirements for individu-

als who meet the eligibility criteria. For qualified seniors, Medicaid will pay the premium for Medicare parts A & B, Medicare deductibles, and Medicare co-insurance.

For 2009, eligible seniors must :

- Be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen, and Florida resident
- Be enrolled in at least Medicare Part A
- Have a monthly income of \$918 or less for an individual, or \$1,235 or less for a couple
- Have assets of \$5,000 or less for an individual, or \$6,000 or less for a couple\*

*\*Some assets are excluded, including your home and one vehicle.*

An eligible senior in the QMB program could save over \$1,100 per year in premiums, and potentially thousands more depending on their yearly healthcare expenditures.

To find out if you or your loved one qualifies for the QMB or other Medicaid programs, please contact Elder Options, your Aging Resource Center, at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).

*"For age is opportunity no less than youth itself, though in another dress; and as the evening twilight fades away, the sky is filled with stars, invisible by day."  
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

## Important Dates: Spring 2009

Date	Event	Notes
3/16/09	Alachua County Senior Health Fair 10 AM — 1 PM	Rosa B. Williams Center Gainesville
3/25/09	Elder Options Board of Directors and Advisory Council Orientation 10 AM	Elder Options' Offices RSVP to Sarah Ellis, 352-378-6649
3/31/09	Suwannee County Fair Senior Day 11 AM — 1 PM	Suwannee County Fairgrounds 1302 11th Street, Live Oak Free admission and lunch for Seniors
3/31/09	Get Up & Get Fit—Lake City Senior Activity Workshop 9 AM	LifeStyle Enrichment Center 628 SE Allison Court, Lake City
4/06/09	Get Up & Get Fit—Gainesville Senior Activity Workshop 9:30 AM	Thelma Boltin Senior Center 516 NE 2nd Ave, Gainesville
4/06/09	Grandparents and Relatives Raising Grandchildren Workshop—Citrus County 11 AM — 12 PM	Citrus County Community Support Services 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, FL Free to public, for more info contact Cindy: 352-692-5260
4/17/09	Grandparents and Relatives Raising Grandchildren Workshop—Columbia County 10:30 AM — 11:30 AM	LifeStyle Enrichment Center 628 SE Allison Court, Lake City Free to public, for more info contact Cindy: 352-692-5260
4/30/09	Local Coalition Workgroup Meeting 9:30 AM — 11:30 AM	Haven Hospice Community Room 4200 NW 90th Blvd, Gainesville
5/08/09-5/09/08	Advent Christian Village Health Fair	8 AM—3 PM on Friday, 8 AM—12 PM on Saturday Phillips Center; Dowling Park, FL

# ELDER OPTIONS

Your Link to Aging Resources in Mid-Florida

5700 S.W. 34th Street

Suite 222

Gainesville, FL 32669

Elder Helpline: 800-963-5337

Agency Phone: 352-378-6649

Fax: 352-378-1256

E-mail: [info@agingresources.org](mailto:info@agingresources.org)

## Utilities Assistance for Needy Seniors

Living in Florida has many charms—beautiful beaches to the south, rolling wooded hills to the north; and, for most of the year, temperate weather. However, as the heat of summer begins to bear down upon us, some seniors need a little extra help in keeping their homes comfortable and safe places to live.

The Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Pro-

gram (EHEAEP) can provide financial assistance to seniors experiencing an energy crisis, provided they are age 60 or older and meet the financial eligibility requirements.

An energy crisis may include a current or impending cut-off of utilities, a broken heating/cooling system, lack of household fans or blankets, or an unusually high heating/cooling expense.

Eligible recipients may receive assistance once per energy season, or twice per year maximum. Financial eligibility is determined by the agency in your area designated by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs.

If you or a loved one has an energy crisis, or need more information on the EHEAEP program, please call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-963-5337.

## Celebrate Older Americans, May 2009

Administration on Aging Press Release, 2/10/2009

May is Older Americans Month, a great time to bring attention to the issues that affect older adults and create community-wide opportunities to help older Americans improve their quality of life. This year's theme is "Living Today For a Better Tomorrow," and we, as a nation, must work together to give older adults the tools they need to make healthy decisions.

By 2030, one in every five Americans will be age 65 or older. Although the risk of disease increases with advancing age, poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. Many illnesses, disabilities and even death associated with chronic disease are preventable. Nearly 40% of deaths in America can be attributed to poor health habits such as lack of physical exercise, poor eating habits and smoking. Older Americans can prevent or control chronic disease by adopting healthy habits such as exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy diet and ceasing tobacco use.

While it's important for older Americans to have good physical health, it's equally important that they maintain good mental health. Nearly 20 percent of Americans age 55 and older experience depression and anxiety disorders.

Studies have shown that engaging in social activities within the community can greatly improve mental health. In fact, research has demonstrated a strong relationship between volunteering and mental health and that volunteering provides older adults with greater benefits than younger volunteers. Benefits include improved mental and physical health, greater life satisfaction, lower rates of depression and lower mortality rates.

Americans of all ages and backgrounds can celebrate Older Americans Month. Contact Elder Options, your local Agency on Aging, and volunteer for activities in your area; promote community, state, and national efforts to serve older adults; and find ways to enrich the lives of



  
**Living Today**  
for a Better Tomorrow  
OLDER AMERICANS MONTH MAY 2009

older adults who touch your life. Additionally, actively search out ways you can involve your community's older adults in volunteer efforts, allowing them to share their wisdom and energy. By working together, we can improve the health and well being of our Nation's older adults and pave the way for better health as we age.