

Connecticut State Department on Aging



At a Glance

MARGARET GERUNDO-MURKETTE, MSW – Acting Commissioner

Stephanie P. Marino, Social Services Program Manager, State Unit on Aging

Nancy B. Shaffer, M.A., CT State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Pamela Toohey, Executive Assistant to Commissioner

Statutory authority – CGS Section 17a-317

Central office - 55 Farmington Ave, Hartford, CT 06105

Number of employees – 16 in the State Unit on Aging; 14 in the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Program Budget: \$36,597,297 (25% State funds / 75% Federal funds)

Structure - Commissioner's Office; State Unit on Aging, Long Term Care Ombudsman's Office with Regional Ombudsman Program Offices

State Fiscal Year 2014

(July 2013 - June 2014)

Established January 1, 2013

Mission

The mission of the State Department on Aging is to empower older adults to live full independent lives and to provide leadership on aging issues on behalf of older adults, families, caregivers, and advocates.

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Department administers Older Americans Act programs for supportive services, in-home services, and congregate and home-delivered meals. It also administers programs that provide senior community employment, health insurance counseling, and respite care for caregivers.

The Connecticut State Department on Aging, as the designated State Unit on Aging, ensures that Connecticut's elders have access to the supportive services necessary to live with dignity, security, and independence. The Department is responsible for planning, developing, and administering a comprehensive and integrated service delivery system for older persons in Connecticut.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, administratively housed in the State Department on Aging, provides individual advocacy to residents of skilled nursing facilities, residential care homes and assisted living facilities. The State Ombudsman also advocates for systemic changes in policy and legislation in order to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals who reside in those settings.

The Department works closely with the aging network partners to provide these services. Partners include Connecticut's five area agencies on aging, municipal agents for the elderly, senior centers, and many others who provide services to older adults.

Statutory Responsibility

The State Department, its programs and responsibilities are found in the following sections of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.):

Sec. 17a-317 (Establishment of the State Department on Aging); Sec. 17b-33 (Fall Prevention Program); Sec. 17b-251 (Connecticut Partnership for Long-Term Care outreach program); Sec. 17b-427 (CHOICES, the federally funded health insurance assistance program); Sec. 17b-792 (Nutrition programs for elderly persons); Sec. 17b-349e (Respite care services for caretakers of Alzheimer's patients); Sec. 17b-367a (Community Choices (ADRC) program); and Sec. 17b-400 (Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman).

PUBLIC CONTACT POINTS

Websites and web pages:

- State Department on Aging: www.ct.gov/aging
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman: www.ct.gov/lcop
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers: www.myplacect.org
- Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care: www.ctpartnership.org

- Facebook Triads: <https://www.facebook.com/CTriads?ref=hl>;
- Consumer Law Project for Elders: <http://ctlawhelp.org/self-help-guides/elder-law>

Toll-free information:

- General public information: 1-866-218-6631
- TDD/TTY for persons with hearing impairment: 1-800-842-4524
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman: 1-866-388-1888
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers: 1-800-994-9422
- CHOICES (Connecticut Health Insurance Assistance, Outreach, Information and Referral, Counseling and Eligibility Screening): 1-800-994-9422
- Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care: 1-800-547-3443

Empower Connecticut's older residents, their families, and other consumers to make informed decisions about, and be able to easily access, existing health and long-term care options.

State Department on Aging Programs

Advance Directives: Developed by the Legal Assistance Developer "Advance Directives: Planning for Future Health Care Decisions" empower residents to make informed decisions about their own health care needs. Advance Directives are available in both English and Spanish either by calling the Department or on the Department website. The Legal Assistance Developer also makes public presentations concerning Advance Directives upon request.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC): Aging and Disability Resource Centers (also known as Community Choices) are available statewide and currently serve older adults, individuals aged 18 and over with a disability, and caregivers. Community Choices supports people through a coordinated system of information and access. Using extensive knowledge and resources people are connected to a myriad of services and supports including but not limited to benefits screening, information and assistance, decision support, follow-up and options counseling. Program partners include the state's five (5) Area Agencies on Aging, five (5) Centers for Independent Living and Connecticut Community Care, Inc., and UConn Center on Aging. In FFY 2014 the competitive federal grant funding is \$762,046.

CHOICES: Connecticut's programs for Health insurance assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling and Eligibility Screening (CHOICES) program is the Department's State Health Insurance Assistance Program, a national volunteer based program that provides older persons and their families information and assistance about current Medicare benefits and options. Free counseling and assistance is provided via telephone and face-to-face interactive sessions, public education presentations and programs and media activities.

CHOICES is a cooperative effort with the five Area Agencies on Aging and the Center for Medicare Advocacy. In FFY 2014, \$554,605 was received in federal funding. In SFY 2014, \$727,316 was received in state funding.

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Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care: The Partnership provides education and outreach and offers, through private insurers' special long-term care insurance to help individuals increase their options and avoid impoverishing themselves when paying for their long-term care. Coordinated by the Office of Policy and Management, the Partnership has an information and education program managed by the Department. The SDA also provides one-on-one counseling, distributes educational materials and conducts regional public forums and other community presentations. In SFY 2014, \$9,000 in state funds was received by the SUA.

During state fiscal year 2014 the Partnership:

- Responded to 497 requests for information
- Counseled 369 people
- Reached 304 people through public forums

Human Resources Agency - Las Perlas Hispanas Senior Center: Las Perlas Hispanas Senior Center received funding in the amount of \$20,000 for SFY 2014. The funding is used for outreach to low-income seniors in need of case management, socialization and information and referral services.

Enable Connecticut's seniors to remain in their own homes with high quality of life for as long as possible through the provision of home and community-based services, including supports for family caregivers.

Alzheimer's Aide funding: This state funding is designated to assist in subsidizing the cost of Alzheimer's Aides in Adult Day Care Centers. It is administered by the five Area Agencies on Aging. In SFY 2014, \$173,223 was received in state funds.

Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP): With \$362,085 in federal funding for FFY 2014 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and \$134,230 in state funding for SFY 2014, CHSP provides congregate meals and supportive services to frail elders and persons with temporary or permanent disabilities in rural areas who would otherwise be vulnerable to premature institutionalization. This program serves 289 participants in nine (9) of the most vulnerable housing communities located in the eastern and western areas of the state.

Connecticut Statewide Respite Program: In partnership with the Area Agencies on Aging, the Statewide Respite Care Program offers short-term respite care for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Respite services may include adult day care, homemaker and companion.

In SFY 2014, \$2,179,670 was received in state funds for this program and 708 individuals received respite services.

Grandparents as Parents Support Network: The State Department on Aging, with support from agencies throughout Connecticut, developed the Grandparents as Parents Support network (GAPS). Utilizing its Listserve, information is shared among the network of over 162 agencies, individuals and community organizations regarding grant opportunities, advocacy, legislative updates and other pertinent subjects such as legal issues and community resources. Information regarding the 73 known support groups in Connecticut that provide assistance to grandparents and relative caregivers is also shared with the Listserve.

National Family Caregiver Support Program/OAA Title III-E (NFCSP): In partnership with the Area Agencies on Aging, this program considers caregivers' unique values and needs and offers a range of services that enable caregivers to easily access the right services at the appropriate times. The major components of the program include information about available services, access to supportive services, individual counseling, support groups, caregiver training, respite care and supplemental services. Priority consideration is given to those with the greatest social and economic need and to older individuals who provide care to children ages 18 and younger with severe

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disabilities.

In FFY 2013, \$1,749,484 was allocated to community providers. 727,073 contacts were made for information and access services. Of the remaining program categories, there were 1,089 unduplicated caregivers who received 30,893 units of service.

Reverse Annuity Mortgage: Reverse Mortgages are a type of home loan which allow older homeowners in need of extra income to convert some of the equity in their homes to cash. It allows older adults aged 70 and older to use the equity in their homes to collect tax-free payments as income. This income allows homeowners to stay in their homes and to help avoid institutionalization. The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) provides the funds and determines eligibility. The State Department on Aging forwards reviewed applications to CHFA for processing. In SFY 2014, three applications were forward to the CHFA.

Supportive Services/Older Americans Act Title III-B: Funding provides home and community based care, most supportive services fall under three broad categories:

- Access services i.e. case management, information and referrals, outreach and transportation;
- In-home services such as homemakers services, chore maintenance, and supportive services for family members of older individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease; and
- Community Services including adult day care and legal assistance.

In FFY 2013, \$3,585,675 was received in Title III B funds.

The Veteran's Directed Home and Community Services Program: Through funding from the federal Veterans Administration (VA) and in partnership with the Administration for Community Living, the Department implemented the Veteran's Directed Home and Community-based Services program. This partnership is designed to keep veterans in the community by enabling the veteran to self-direct their own care, manage an individualized budget and receive services in their home by the caregiver of their choice. The program expanded statewide in March 2014 which allows veterans anywhere in Connecticut to receive

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self-directed home care services through VD-HCBS. Funding passes directly from the VA CT Healthcare System to the AAAs. The SDA facilitates the program statewide but does not receive federal funding to do so.

Number of Veterans Served:

- South Central Region – 25 and received \$470,659 in FFY 2013.
- Southwestern Region – 15 (maximum number allowed) and received \$569,935 in FFY 2013.

Empower older people to stay active and healthy through Older Americans Act services and the new prevention benefits under Medicare.

CHOICES: For more information about CHOICES please refer to page 3.

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program: The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), or Live Well as branded in Connecticut, is a six week lay-led participant education program developed by Dr. Kate Lorig at Stanford University for adults who are experiencing chronic conditions. The program provides information and teaches practical skills on managing and living with chronic health problems.

The State Unit on Aging, in partnership with the CT Department of Public Health has received two competitive grants from the Administration for Community Living to disseminate and embed Live Well and the Spanish Tomando version within Connecticut's health and community service systems. In September 2012, the health and aging partnership continued with the State Unit on Aging receiving an additional three-year expansion grant from the Affordable Care Act – Prevention and Public Health Fund. This grant builds upon previous efforts to integrate chronic disease self-management education programs (CDSME) on the state and local level in supportive partnership with the Medicaid Access Agencies, ADRC's, the Area Agencies on Aging and community health systems and to now allow for the development of the Stanford Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP).

To date 2142 participants have attended CDSMP, Tomando and DSMP workshops. This competitive grant funding from the Prevention and Public Health Care Fund Grant is \$488,248 for the three (3) year period ending September 2015.

Connecticut Statewide Fall Prevention Initiative: Using state funds this program provides fall prevention assessment, training and outreach initiatives statewide. These efforts include the education of older adults regarding epidemiology of falls; identifying characteristics of increased risk; development; provision of individual risk assessments and interventions to reduce fall risk; provision of fall risk assessments and interventions for those who have sustained fall related injuries and statewide network of instructors for Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance. In SFY 2014, \$395,250 was received in state funds.

Elderly Health Screening: This state funded program provides health screening services, follow-up care and programs related to health promotion and wellness to persons age 60 and over at various sites throughout the state. Services

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are provided by Community Health Centers, Public Health and Social Services Departments and an Area Agency on Aging. Services include, but are not limited to, breast and prostate cancer screenings, cholesterol, diabetes checks, obesity screening, oral health, cardiovascular, vision and glaucoma. Follow up referral services are also provided.

In State Fiscal Year 2014, \$294,976 was received in state funds.

Elderly Nutrition Program: Using Federal OAA Title III C-1, C-2 and NSIP as well as state funding, the Elderly Nutrition Program serves nutritionally balanced meals, both home delivered and congregate meals, and provides other nutrition services such as nutrition education or nutrition counseling to individuals age 60 and older and their spouses.

The Elderly Nutrition Program is supported by federal, state, and local funds as well as voluntary client contributions. Funds are designated to the five (5) Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) who contract with nine (9) Elderly Nutrition Projects (ENPs). In 2013 \$10,822,844 was received in funding for the Elderly Nutrition Program.

In 2013:

- 17,209 participants were served and 775,409 congregate meals were provided
- 6,313 participants were served and 1,277,677 home delivered meals were provided

Health Promotion Services and Disease Prevention/OAA Title III-D: Through the Area Agencies on Aging, the Department supports education and implementation activities that support healthy lifestyles and promotes healthy behaviors. Additionally, evidence-based health promotion programs are supported to reduce the need for more costly medical interventions. In FFY 2014, \$244,076 was received in federal funds.

New England Cognitive Center-Brain GYMM: The NECC designs and provides targeted exercises to stimulate identified parts of the brain that are affected by the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Individuals are tested to determine their level of cognitive function and then work with a trainer to address cognitive deficits. In SFY 2014, \$50,909 was received in state funds and 69 individuals with Alzheimer's disease received services through this project.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP): Using Older Americans Act Title V funds, SCSEP is a federally

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funded program through the U.S. Department of Labor designed to assist older workers age 55 years and older prepare for today's job market and re-enter the workforce. The State Unit on Aging, as the State Grantee, received \$927,872 in funding for SFY 2014 to administer the program. There are five (5) contractors covering Fairfield, Litchfield, New London and New Haven counties to provide SCSEP services. There are two national grantees that provide services in the other counties of Connecticut.

SCSEP provides job skills training and job development services to low-income residents. Services are delivered through on-the-job training at local non-profit agencies and classroom training. Supportive services are often provided including, but not limited to, Dress for Success, assistive technology and transportation.

During State Fiscal Year 2014, SCSEP:

- provided services to 130 low-income older workers;
- met 158.5% of its expected service level; and
- 37.8% of enrollees secured unsubsidized employment (U.S. Department of Labor's Goal: 27.1%)

Ensure the rights of older people and prevent their abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC): For more information on ADRCs please refer to page 3.

Elder Rights/Elder Abuse Programing/ Title III and Title VII: Through the Legal Assistance Developer, the Department seeks to improve the quality and quantity of legal and advocacy services available to the state's vulnerable older residents and serves as a resource to provide technical assistance to and with legal assistance providers within the aging network. In FFY 2013, 6876 units of service were provided to 956 consumers. The three legal assistance programs received a total of \$275,657 to provide these and other legal services statewide for the Elderly.

The Department assists in the development of elder abuse programming and resources throughout the state. The Department also collaborates with the aging network and law enforcement to support community initiatives such as Triads (which work to reduce criminal victimization of older persons) In FFY 2014, \$59,907 in federal funds was received.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program: Advocates for residents of the state's nursing homes, residential care homes and assisted living communities. For more in depth information please refer to page 12.

SMP: Formerly known as the Senior Medicare Patrol, this program empowers seniors to prevent becoming victims of health care fraud. SMP helps Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, family members and caregivers avoid, detect and prevent health care fraud. The primary goal is to teach Medicare beneficiaries how to protect their personal identity, report errors on their health care bills, and identify deceptive health care practices (i.e. charging for services that were never provided). In FFY 2014, \$277,884 was received in federal funds.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTOCP) works to improve the quality of life and quality of care of Connecticut citizens residing in nursing homes, residential care homes and assisted living communities.



The Mission of the Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of long term care residents by:

- Investigating complaints and concerns made by residents, or on behalf of residents, in a timely and prompt manner;
- Bringing residents to the forefront to voice their concerns directly to public officials on issues affecting their lives;
- Supporting residents in their quest to shape their own legislative agenda and to represent the residents' interests before governmental agencies; and
- Working with other stakeholders, policy makers and legislators to improve residents quality of life and services

The LTCOP responds to, and investigates complaints brought forward by residents, family members and/or other individuals acting on their behalf. Ombudsmen offer information and consultation to consumers and providers, monitor state and federal laws and regulations, and make recommendations for improvement. All Ombudsman activity is performed on behalf of, and at the direction of, the residents and all communication with the residents, their family members or legal guardians, as applicable, is held in strict confidentiality.

Volunteer Resident Advocates

One of the most successful ways the Ombudsman program has of helping residents is its Volunteer Resident Advocate Program. Community volunteers are trained by Ombudsman staff in residents' rights problem solving, interviewing skills, negotiating, working with nursing home staff, and the health care system. After training, Volunteer Advocates are asked to spend four (4) hours per week in one assigned nursing home and help residents solve problems or concerns. Volunteer Resident Advocates meet monthly and participate in ongoing training.

Resident Councils

The Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils is an organization of residents of long term care facilities who work together on the enhancement of the quality of their care and the quality of lives. The LTCOP supports the Coalition in their efforts to effect positive change in larger systems such as local and state governments. The Executive Board of Presidents of Resident Councils is formed to represent the interests of the Coalition and to develop legislative initiatives on behalf of all Connecticut residents of skilled nursing facilities.

Programs

The VOICES forum is an annual event jointly convened by the LTCOP, with the State Department on Aging and the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils. It is an opportunity for Presidents of Resident Councils from around the state to gather and discuss issues and concerns in their homes. The Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is the sponsor and partner of the Statewide Coalitions of Presidents of Resident Councils.

STATE DEPARTMENT ON AGING

Improvements/Achievements for 2013 - 2014

1. The SDA's Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut is the first endeavor of its kind which brings together both private and public stakeholders and agencies across the state to develop cohesive and collaborative initiatives to raise awareness and educate people of all ages about Elder Justice and to develop coordinated efforts to prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Coalition first met in November 2013, at a Call to Action "Kick-Off" conference and subsequently, the 16 member Coordinating Council convened to strategize for the next steps to identify areas of need and develop coordinated efforts among the stakeholders.

In July 2014, Governor Malloy's Executive Order No. 42 directed State agencies to "work together to prevent elder abuse through collaboration" with the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut and its Coordinating Council. The Second Annual conference is planned for November 2014 and again, national experts will join state experts to share information about coordinating efforts across the continuum of elder justice services.

2. In 2013 Veterans Directed Home and Community based service partners developed a formal written expansion and sustainability plan for the program and received the Administration for Community Living and VA Central Office approval to implement the plan. The state developed statewide protocols for program operation and the program expanded statewide in FFY 2014.
3. As mandated by Public Act 13-234, the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is developing a Community Ombudsman pilot project. This new initiative for the LTCOP will provide advocacy services for home and community-based care recipients in Hartford County. This is an important initiative in light of the State's goals of rebalancing the long-term care services and supports as well as honoring individual's preference to reside in their homes and communities rather than living in a more restrictive setting such as a skilled nursing facility.

4. In 2013 Connecticut received the Part A: ADRC Enhanced Options Counseling Grant. This three year grant totals \$2.5 Million to construct a state of the art enhanced options counseling program in CT as a key component of the State's "No Wrong Door Policy".

Unduplicated number of ADRC consumers Served 10/1/12-9/30/13

Total Consumers Served by ADRC	8,063
Consumers Receiving Options Counseling - 18% of total consumers	1,448

5. 118 new volunteers were recruited and trained as CHOICES counselors in 2014. 34,858 Medicare beneficiaries received CHOICES assistance between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

6. Chronic Disease Self-Management Education Programs are now offered statewide with active Regional Coordinators stationed at Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging and within CT Community Care, Inc. which is a Medicaid access agency for the State of Connecticut.