

Aging Matters



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J. A. Martin, Editor

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AoA Releases Reauthorization Principles: CLASS Act Repeal Attempted in Senate

November 4, 2011

The U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) recently made public a set of 11 principles related to the current reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA). The National Area Agency Association on Aging (n4a) has reviewed the document and begun the process of getting further details, where available, from AoA.

Intended to offer technical assistance to Congress as it considers OAA reauthorization, the AoA principles reflect the Administration's response to what it heard in its 2010 OAA listening sessions and offer suggestions to lawmakers that, while specific, stop short of formal recommendations.

Several of the ideas presented in the AoA document reflect some of n4a's reauthorization priorities, including consolidation of the Title C1 and C2 nutrition programs, advancing the capacity of the Aging Network, and promoting evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention.

n4a does not agree with every aspect of AoA's approach to these issues, however, and will be actively working with the Administration and Congress to address any areas of concern. Specifically, n4a is concerned that in several instances the principles pull local dollars up to the state level—whether by allowing a carve-out of III B funds for legal services with only optional funding through AAAs or permitting states to keep III D funds from reaching every PSA.

The larger context for these AoA principles is that the Senate HELP Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, chaired by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), is actively writing legislation to reauthorize OAA. n4a is working closely with this committee, and other Senate offices interested in reauthorization, to promote our priorities and provide the AAA and Title VI perspective on other proposals being pushed by lawmakers.

OAA Reauthorization
continued on page 2

While the House has not yet taken up OAA—and n4a does not expect them to do so until early 2012—the Senate HELP Committee remains focused on moving a bill through committee this fall. More to come!

AoA's Reauthorization Principles Document: http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/OAA/Reauthorization/docs/OAAreauth_summaries_stakeholders.pdf

CLASS Repeal

This has not been a good month for the CLASS program, the long-term services and supports social insurance system passed as a part of Affordable Care Act (ACA) to help individual workers financially protect themselves from long-term care expenses. On October 14, HHS Secretary Sebelius informed Congress that the Administration, despite nearly a year of intensive work, had "not identified a way to make CLASS work at this time."

Despite this major set-back, the needs of millions of American workers and families have not changed, nor have the complications of financing long-term services and supports lessened in any way.

Last week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on CLASS, where Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee testified that "while we have had to suspend our work on implementing CLASS, we remain committed to making sure that people will be able to get the long-term care they need."

The latest political skirmish over CLASS happened earlier this week, when Senator John Thune (R-SD) attempted to repeal CLASS on a Unanimous Consent (UC) vote in the Senate. While CLASS is not advancing administratively at this time, advocates believe it is unnecessary to repeal it, and leaving it in the law at least provides a building block for future progress.

Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) blocked the UC vote, noting that 70 percent of people over 65 will require long-term services and supports at some point in their lives and that 40 percent of people who need long-term services supports are under the age of 65.

FY 2012 Appropriations

Two weeks from now, the continuing resolution (CR) that funds the government through November 18 by keeping most programs frozen at existing levels will expire.

n4a can report that appropriations work is being advanced in the interim, with House and Senate negotiators finding modest success in passing small clusters of two or four appropriations bills merged together to form "minibus" bills. Instead of putting up to 12 of the bills together as one "omnibus," as has been the trend in recent years, these minibuses may prove key to finishing FY 2012 appropriations bills in 2011. n4a also expect Congress to pass another CR, potentially even before this one expires, that would go into December and buy lawmakers more time to do their work.

The spending bill that includes OAA and other critical social supports for older adults, however, retains its reputation as being one of the hardest to pass, given its size and popularity for political battles. The Labor/HHS/Education bill is likely to be one of the last to be finalized, but n4a continues its advocacy to convince appropriators to fund OAA programs at the highest possible levels.

Source: The Involvement Magazine

The article can be found online at <http://www.involvementonline.org/?p=3694>



Lessons for Living: The Legacy Project collects and disseminates elder wisdom

This article originally appeared in the September/October 2011 issue of the Journal on Active Aging, published by the International Council on Active Aging, www.icaa.cc. It is reprinted here with permission. All rights reserved

Collected and preserved by this research project, life lessons offered by older adults challenge society's ageism by showing that, far from being obsolete, today's elders are invaluable resources for younger generations.



by Karl Pillemer, PhD

As a professor of Human Development at Cornell University, I have spent the past 25 years studying how people develop, grow and change over the course of their adult lives. Seven years ago, this research interest led me to what I felt was a riveting idea: Why not invite older people to describe the lessons they have learned about living and make this knowledge accessible to people of all ages?

In contemporary society, our elders, and old age itself, are often treated as problems. Academics, practitioners and policymakers tend to focus on the losses and deficits of aging, such as physical disability, loneliness, loss of significant others, Alzheimer's disease, burden to family caregivers, and increasingly as a cause of government budget deficits. Given that negative focus, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that older people are invaluable resources — conveyors of precious knowledge for younger generations. The Cornell Legacy Project contributes to an accurate portrayal by collecting and sharing the wisdom of older adults.

Using a variety of social science methods, the Legacy Project has asked more than 1,200 people ages 65 and older to reflect on the question: "What are the most important lessons you've learned over the course of your life that you would pass on to younger generations?"

These individuals have provided highly detailed answers about how younger people can live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. They have also shared invaluable lessons for the not-so-young on how to grow old gracefully and joyfully.

An ongoing aim of the Legacy Project is to both disseminate these elders' main lessons for living and to continue to collect new ones (see the sidebar on page 6) to find out how active-aging organizations can help).

Why the Legacy Project?

Because of widespread ageism, this project may surprise some people. Why, they may ask, should we let America's older adults tell us how to live our lives? What relevance do their life lessons have for younger





people today? To answer those questions, let me begin with an anthropological fact. Over the 1.5 million years of human existence, it is only for about the past 200 years that most people have gone to *anyone other than elders* for solutions to life's problems. As the anthropologist Leo Simmons pointed out, "Knowledge, wisdom, and experience are social assets which normally accumulate with age and outlast physical stamina Those endowed with the art of writing and surrounded by printed documents can scarcely appreciate the inestimable value of an aged person possessing more knowledge than any other source within reach."¹ For much of history, the knowledge older people possessed — about hunting, farming and healing, for example — was a key to human survival. One could argue that the value of this type of knowledge is a thing of the past. We now have phalanxes of professionals, television, and of course the Internet. Information is so readily available, and knowledge so quickly out of date, that older people are much more likely to be seen as obsolete than to be treated as sages.

It is the fundamental assumption of the Legacy Project that elders in our society have a critically important knowledge advantage over younger people. Put simply: *They have lived their lives*. They have been where most younger Americans have not. Many people over the age of 70 grew up in poverty, living hand-to-mouth during the Great Depression. They (or their parents or siblings) went to war while their families suffered from uncertainty, emotional distress and economic difficulties. Women had far fewer options for employment and self-development, struggling to find their place in the world. Men frequently had jobs instead of careers, working long hours to make ends meet. In sum, today's older adults have been placed in situations that tested their limits, and their valuable insights for living well through hard times are highly relevant today.

Equally important, because of their location at the end of the human life span, older people have already experienced many of the losses and challenges that worry the young—for example, widowhood, illness, unemployment. Many have been married for 30, 40 or 50 years or longer. They have raised children and reflected on what worked and what didn't. As they near life's exit door, they, more than anyone else, can tell us about aging well and how to prepare for the end of life.

Finally, there is a particularly urgent reason for listening to the practical wisdom of America's elders: this invaluable resource is running out. The last veterans of World War I are gone; those of World War II are now in their 80s or older. Children of the Great Depression have reached their 70s. In earlier human societies, knowledge about how to live life was passed down from generation to generation (indeed, as mentioned, this is how we survived as a species). When this generation is gone, however, their wisdom may pass away unnoticed. The Legacy Project aims to take the lessons older adults have learned and make them available, so younger people — today and in the future—can use them to improve their lives and answer life's difficult questions.

Methods of the Legacy Project

When I began the Legacy Project, I consulted the available social science literature for guidance. To my surprise, although there had been considerable research on elder wisdom in general, I was unable to find a



single study that asked older people for their specific advice for happy and successful living. Further, most projects on the topic of wisdom had used small, convenience samples that were not representative of the larger population. Our goal was to gather advice for living from a large and diverse group of older Americans, so that we could take advantage of “the wisdom of crowds.” We wished to obtain lessons from individuals in all regions of the country and from different religious, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. To accomplish this exhaustive approach to gathering the data, we took the following steps.

First, we contacted alumni of several colleges. We wrote to former students ages 65 and over, asking them to send us their life lessons. We then created a website and publicized it nationally through press releases that were picked up by many organizations for older people as well as local newspapers. Elders — who are much more tech-savvy than many of us acknowledge — More than 600 responses were received by these individuals in other countries.

Next, we expanded the study by doing a national survey. Individuals ages 60 and over from around the United States were selected at random and called on the telephone by trained interviewers.

In these interviews, we were able to pose our questions more specifically. We began by asking in general: “What lessons have you learned in your life?” But we followed up by asking what respondents felt they had learned in specific domains.

We also asked whether there were any problems or difficulties in their lives that had taught them valuable things, and what core values and principles they lived by. Additionally, we asked if they had any advice for younger people about how to live successfully. We conducted over 300 of these interviews, all of which were tape-recorded and transcribed.

Finally, we solicited nominations of older adults from a variety of organizations, including seniors centers, county offices for the aging, and the independent and assisted living communities of Brookdale Senior Living. Individuals were nominated specifically because they were seen as possessing wisdom for living (and we were not disappointed!).

In-depth, tape-recorded interviews were conducted with approximately 350 of these nominees.

In all, the respondents provided thousands of lessons on a vast range of topics. As we analyzed the interviews, we found that the lessons could be grouped into broad themes. The main themes on which people gave advice were:

- Love and Marriage
- Raising Children
- Work and Career
- Money (making and managing it)
- Faith and Spirituality
- Health



gave us their thoughts via the Web. methods, including a number from

survey. Individuals ages 60 and selected at random and called on the

questions more specifically. We you learned in your life?” But we they had learned in specific

or difficulties in their lives that had values and principles they lived by. for younger people about how to these interviews, all of which were



How you can help with the Legacy Project

A goal of the Cornell University Legacy Project is to continue to collect older people's lessons for living. To make it easy to participate, we have set up a simple page on the Legacy Project website where individuals can enter their lessons. We especially urge organizations that serve elders to encourage their residents or participants to contribute their advice to the Legacy Project. Here are some ways you can facilitate these contributions:

- > Post a flyer about the project or include a brief description in your newsletter.
- > If you work with those who have diminished capacity, encourage staff, volunteers or family members to do brief interviews with elders and post responses on the Legacy Project website.
- > Encourage Legacy Project participation as an activity for computer training classes.
- > Include interviewing elders and posting their life lessons as an intergenerational program activity.

To contribute lessons, visit <http://legacyproject.human.cornell.edu/give-your-advice>. There is an easy-to-use form on this webpage, and we approve and respond to contributions quickly. Everyone is also invited to join a dialogue about elder wisdom at the Legacy Project Facebook page at www.facebook.com/#!/lessonsforliving.

- Avoiding Stress and Worry
- Living with Loss
- Facing the End of Life
- Living Compassionately
- Avoiding Regrets
- Aging Well

In this article, I will focus on lessons for aging well as an example of their advice giving. The contributions endorse the concept of active aging and provide a positive take on growing older despite challenges and loss. Lessons for living on other topics can be found on the Legacy Project website (<http://legacyproject.human.cornell.edu>).

Lessons for aging well

One of the most surprising aspects of my conversations with Legacy Project elders was how generally positive they were about this life stage. Indeed, their overall message can be summed up as: *Being old is much better than most people think it will be.* There was an exuberance to many of the responses. These individuals had found that life after 70 was interesting, engaging and enjoyable. For example, Harry stated: *"In my own life, now 81 years, some of my most creative years came after age 70. The result is that it opened a whole new world of admiring friends and business associates nationwide. I now work at least two full days and three half-days a week in the business and play golf the other half-days for exercise and the joy of competing on the golf course with many more long-term, close friends.*

My choice is to live to the fullest until my time to depart, when my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren can grab the baton and carry it aloft for as long as their allotted time. To me, life is for living as long as I am physically able to get up and move."

Lenore provided her prescription for a good old age: *"I am 89 years young at heart, living in assisted living. Keep learning every day that passes. Keep active both mentally and physically every day. Life has so much to offer. Take a walk if you can. Even if you are wheelchair bound, do some movement of your arms and legs. Read*





magazines or books and share your thoughts with others. Keep your sense of humor. Life is so much fun and a laugh lightens whatever is wrong.”

This attitude was perhaps best summed up by one 93-year-old respondent: “My advice about growing old? I’d tell them to find the magic!”

The Legacy Project elders offered a number of specific lessons for growing old fearlessly and well:

- *Stay connected.* The elders say we have to take very seriously the threat of social isolation in later life. We should make conscious and assertive efforts to stay connected, through new learning opportunities and creating new relationships. Respondents told us things like: “Always reach out. You don’t want to become isolated.” “At 70 or 80 my lesson is: Learn to be social!”
- *Explore senior living communities.* Many of the Legacy Project elders say that as we grow older, we should consider more supported living options. A move to a senior living community often opens up opportunities for better living. The support and sociability, they say, keeps older adults engaged and healthier. Said one individual: “I didn’t realize how much fun it is being with people on a regular basis, and being in community with them, sharing our lives. And there are about as many activities as you’re interested in.” Respondents noted that many people have preconceived notions about senior living communities that deter them from considering the option. This, according to the elders, is a mistake.
- *Stay active.* The elders’ almost universal lesson for the good life in old age is to maintain as high a level of activity as possible. Learning activities are at the top of the list. According to one Legacy Project participant: “Keep learning every day that passes. Education is important and you are never too old to learn something new — computers and the latest technology or a new way to cook something or how to make a quilt. Take classes that are offered by your local library. Satisfy your curiosity.”
- *Plan for the end of life.* We asked the respondents about their thoughts regarding the end of life. Most individuals were not fearful or concerned about death itself (a finding consistent with other research showing that death anxiety is lower among older adults). However, they did encourage all of us to “plan for the journey.” This kind of lesson was typical for the elders: “One piece of advice I would give certainly would be to prepare living wills, to have people that you trust be healthcare proxies, and to take all those kinds of precautions that you can. Too many people just don’t give it any thought. And then their children or grandchildren have to make really, really tough decisions and that’s not fair. So the main piece of advice I would give is to make those kinds of decisions ahead of time as best you can.”

Continuing the Legacy Project

Over the years that we have been conducting the Legacy Project, we have seen three major benefits. First, individuals who offer their advice find it to be a very positive experience. Many respondents expressed pleasant surprise that someone was interested in their advice for living, and being able to offer their 1. Simmons, L. W. (1945). *The Role of the Aged in Primitive Society*, p. 131. New Haven CT: Yale University Press.



lessons felt meaningful and fulfilling. This activity provides an opportunity for elders to engage in generativity — offering wisdom to assist the younger generation.

Second, feedback from younger readers of the life lessons indicates that they find the advice useful and that reading it makes them feel more connected to the older generation. Third, we hope that taking seriously the life lessons of the oldest Americans can help to reduce the pervasive ageism in our society and encourage a more complete picture of older adults.

The Legacy Project's continuing intergenerational dialogue. We take place in families and that promote active aging can the sidebar on page 6, we would to post their advice for living on Participation is by no means greatly appreciate contributions Discussing and posting life groups of older adults intergenerational project. By archiving, analyzing and publicizing the useful advice of our elders, we hope to offer people of all ages the benefits of their practical wisdom.



goal is to foster this kind of believe that such discussions can neighborhoods. But organizations also play a key role. As described in like as many older adults as possible the Legacy Project website. limited to the United States; we of lessons from other countries. lessons can be a valuable activity for everywhere, as well as an interesting

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Activities from our Regional Senior Centers

The Council of Senior Tyler Countians, Inc. held a Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting on November 16th for the new Wellness Center. The new Wellness Center was made possible by Community Partnership Grant, Stealey Grant, Community Foundation of the Ohio Valley, Tyler County Senior Center Quilting Ladies, and the Tyler County Senior Center Nutrition Council. The Wellness Center is open Monday thru Friday from 8AM to 6PM and Saturday from 8AM to 1PM. Seniors ages 60 and over is by donation and under the age of 60 a single monthly membership fee is \$15 or Family Membership is \$20 per month. Along with the fitness equipment, classes currently being offered are 3 Mile Walk, Chair Aerobics, Yoga, and Zumba.



Seniors Maintain Better Quality of Life with Lifelong Exercise

New research shows senior active skiers have twice the oxygen-uptake capacity of seniors who do not exercise.

“The findings show that humans have a great potential to maintain a high level of physical work capacity and thereby better quality of life even at advanced ages,” says Per Tesch, professor of sports science.

A year ago researchers launched a study of seniors who are still active skiers. The study attracted a great deal of attention in the media in connection with testing and experiments in J stersund. Some of Sweden’s skiing icons, now more than 90 years old, took part.

Now the results are being presented. They show that the maximum capacity for oxygen uptake among active senior men is twice as great as for men who do not exercise. The results show that seniors are comparable to men who are 40-50 years old in terms of stamina. Analyses of the molecular and cellular profile are similar to younger men.

“The high values measured have never before in a population of advanced age,” says Per Tesch.

The study is part of a larger collaborative project co-directed by physiologist Per Tesch.

The ultimate purpose of the project is to study how musculature, the circulatory apparatus, and performance are affected by lifelong exercising well into senior years.



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Retrieved from the Elements4Health website at elements4health.com.



Fear of Frailty: Research Shows Lack of Activity Threatens Seniors' Independence

The fear of growing frail creates worry not only for the elderly, but also younger adults - many of whom are daughters - concerned about the health and safety of their aging loved ones. That's according to results of a recent survey of seniors and adult children that reveals staying physically active is a major challenge for older adults.

Omaha, NE (PRWEB) February 2, 2010 Fear of frailty is of paramount concern not only for seniors, but adults ages 35 to 62 - many of whom are daughters - worried about the health and safety of their older loved ones. That's according to results of a recent survey of seniors and adult children(1) that reveals staying physically active is a major challenge for older adults.

Lack of activity can lead to a downward spiral of poor health resulting in frailty, a condition that threatens the mind, body and social life of older adults, according to senior care experts.

"We regularly see seniors who are literally trapped in their homes because they are too weak to perform many of the activities they need to remain safe and independent, or to even enjoy life," said Home Instead Senior Care Co-Founder and CEO Paul Hogan. "That's why staying active is viewed by so many as vital to healthy aging. Differences in perceptions between family caregivers and seniors can make addressing these issues challenging for many families."

This problem is what prompted Home Instead Senior Care to develop the Get Mom Moving Activity Cards and Web site, both designed to help keep seniors engaged and fit in order to help them fight frailty. A recent national survey conducted for the Home Instead Senior Care network found that 74 percent of seniors 65 and older say that staying physically active is a major challenge. Adult caregivers see the problem as well: 82 percent of adult caregivers listed staying physically active as a top challenge for seniors. That challenge leads to another worry: 90 percent of seniors in the survey say their greatest fear is loss of independence.

Frailty can be difficult to define, but most know it when they see it, said Stephanie Studenski, M.D., M.P.H., one of the nation's foremost authorities and researchers of mobility, balance disorders and falls in older adults, and director of clinical research for the University of Pittsburgh Institute on Aging. Medical professionals describe frailty as a syndrome of weakness, fatigue and decline in physical activity that may be triggered by hormonal or inflammatory changes or chronic disease states. For some, frailty results from a heart attack or stroke, while another senior might experience falls and weight loss.

Staying active in body and mind can slow and even reverse frailty in seniors.



"Through activity, seniors can build both physical and mental reserves that can help their body better tolerate problems that come with aging."



Studenski and her colleagues conducted a series of focus groups with health care providers and family caregivers about how they perceive frailty in an effort to better identify the condition. “I think the thing that was most striking to me was that many family members we talked with perceived that an older person is getting more or less frail based more on social and psychological factors rather than physical factors. Doctors, on the other hand, focused on the physical manifestations in an older adult,” she noted.

Dr. Studenski said that frailty can be both prevented and reversed by activity. “One of the core ideas in aging is that there are underlying problems in the body’s self-correcting mechanism. For example, when a young person is bleeding, the body self-corrects by increasing the heart rate. But older adults, because of medication or health problems, may have lost the ability to self-correct by being able to increase their heart rate. Through activity, though, seniors can build both physical and mental reserves that can help their body better tolerate problems that come with aging.”

So, in a very real way, family members who can encourage and integrate physical, mental and social activities in seniors’ lives are helping them ward off frailty and stay healthy. And that addresses seniors’ biggest fear of losing their independence as well. “This topic is at the heart of the concerns that we see each day in the lives of seniors and those who care for them,” said Home Instead Senior Care’s Hogan. “Fear of frailty keeps seniors worried about whether they can stay home.”

(1)The Boomer Project (<http://www.boomerproject.com>) completed online interviews with 523 seniors and 1,279 adult caregivers, ages 35-62, with a parent, stepparent or older relative for whom they or someone in their household provides care.

Source: Home Instead Senior Care

The article can be found online at: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/GetMomMoving/01/prweb3535944>

Senate HELP Subcommittee Begins Drafting OAA Reauthorization Legislation

The Senate HELP Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, chaired by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), has begun drafting OAA reauthorization legislation and hopes to “mark up” a bill in the next few months. n4a is working closely with all key Senate offices to advance our reauthorization priorities and will be doing the same with their House counterparts in early 2012.

Meanwhile, some Members of Congress have begun introducing legislation to amend the OAA in one way or another, with the goal of ultimately attaching their stand-alone bill to the authorizing committee’s legislation. Longtime OAA champions Senators Herbert Kohl (D-WI) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) have introduced S. 1819, “Strengthening Services for America’s Seniors Act.” Their bill encourages the use of standardized assessments of caregivers in the National Family Caregiver Support Program; makes supportive changes to the long-term care ombudsman program; and creates an advisory committee to look at improving legal services programs. n4a has endorsed S. 1819 and worked closely with the sponsoring Senators’ staffs to fine tune the legislation so that it reflects the realities faced by the Aging Network in implementing OAA.



Activities from our Regional Senior Centers



In honor of Veteran's Day, Senior Monongalians held their annual Veteran's Day Ceremony on Friday, November 4. Members of retired veteran's groups represented each branch of the military.

Each veteran was presented with a certificate of appreciate for service signed by Senator Joe Manchin and a gift bag from their branch of the military.



We invite everyone to join us for our annual Christmas Luncheon on Friday, December 16th. Make your reservations by 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 16th. Reservations can be made by calling 304-296-9812.



A wonderful crowd of over 120 people joined us for our annual Thanksgiving Luncheon on Friday, November 18th. Local musician Conni Mantini entertained us with polka and big band era music. A good time was had by all of the Senior Monongalians' family.



Activities from our Regional Senior Centers



Seniors arrive at the Wood County Senior Center to enjoy a variety of activities, including a Halloween Party and socializing over a friendly game of pool.



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Join more than 3,000 professionals dedicated to enhancing the lives of older adults at the largest multidisciplinary conference on aging.

Aging in America, the 2012 Annual Conference of the American Society on Aging takes place March 28–April 1 in Washington, DC. The ASA Conference, with more than 3,000 attendees, is recognized as a showcase for programs and projects that can be replicated, a forum for policy discussion and advocacy, and a prime source of information on new research findings in aging. It is the largest gathering of a diverse, multidisciplinary community of professionals from the fields of aging, healthcare and education, along with business leaders from across the United States.

Register online at <http://www.asaging.org/aia12>.