



WASHINGTON UPDATE

March 2014

Policy Sessions at American Society on Aging Conference

Staff members of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging will present several sessions at the 2014 American Society on Aging conference, March 11-15, including many on public policy issues.

March 11

ASA's 60 Years in the Field of Aging: Looking Back, Leaning Forward

A Reflection on ASA's 60 Years

March 12

Panel of Pundits

March 13

The Aging Network - Are We Ready for Our Consumers to be Customers?

The Politics of Aging in the 21st Century

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Congressional Update

Older Americans Act Begins Motion in the House

As reported last month, H.R. 3850, The Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2014, was introduced in the House in January by Reps. Chris Gibson (R-NY), Tom Reed (R-NY), and Betty McCollum (D-MN). It would reauthorize the OAA for five years and be a "straight reauthorization," making no changes to the Act. It now has two Ohio co-sponsors — Reps. Bill Johnson (R) and Steve Stivers (R).

A hearing entitled "Serving Seniors through the Older Americans Act" was held on February 11 by the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Older Americans Act. Denise Niese, Executive Director of the Wood County Committee on Aging in Bowling Green, Ohio, was among the witnesses who testified on behalf of the benefits of the Act. The hearing examined the services provided under the Act and allowed members to ask questions about the Act and discuss priorities for reauthorization. The archived webcast and written testimony from each of the witnesses can be found online at <http://edworkforce.house.gov/legislation>.

On February 28, Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), together with Reps. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX, Ranking Member of the Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee) and George Miller (D-CA, Ranking Member of the Education and the Workforce Committee), introduced H.R. 4122, The Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2014. This version of the OAA reauthorization is based on the Senate HELP-passed bill (S. 1028) and expands on that bill to add further provisions, including sections on cultural competency, elder abuse, nutrition screening, and LGBT

March 13

National Forum on Elder Justice

Keeping Dual Eligibles with Mental Disorders in the Community

March 14

Future of the Aging Network in Long-Term Care

Challenges to the Sustainability of Ohio's Lifespan Respite Initiatives

For more information on these and other sessions at the ASA Conference, visit www.benrose.org/KPI.

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elders. A press release from Rep. Bonamici's office can be found online at <http://bonamici.house.gov/press-releases>.

Reach out to your local representative (in Northeast Ohio: Marcia Fudge (D), Jim Renacci (R) or Marcie Kaptur (D)) to educate them on the OAA. Contact Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC, Chair of the Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee) and Rep. John Kline (R-MN, Chair of the Education and the Workforce Committee) to ask them to consider OAA reauthorization in committee.

Controversy over Proposed Medicare Part D Rule

In January, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed a rule that would alter the Medicare Part D program's coverage for some classes of prescription drugs and limit plans available in any given region to two.

A provision of the proposed rule would eliminate or narrow certain "protected classes" of prescription drugs which insurers are currently required to cover in all forms: anti-depressants and immune-suppressants this year and potentially antipsychotics in 2015. In addition, the proposed rule would permit limitations of access to mail-order pharmacies.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee's Health Subcommittee held a hearing on February 26 to examine this proposed rule. In addition, over 300 organizations have sent a joint letter to CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner protesting the rule, and the entire Senate Finance Committee sent a letter to Tavenner as well.

The Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging opposes specifically those provisions impacting access to anti-depressants and psychotropic medications, as well as mail order restrictions. All of these provisions could make the management of mental health conditions in the community more difficult. We have submitted our comments, and encourage readers to do the same.

Comments on the rule are due March 7.

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