



## ABSTRACT

**A SUMMARY OF THE 2008 ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (AIP) FOR OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA), NEW YORK STATE COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY (CSE) AND EXPANDED IN-HOME SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY (EISEP) PROGRAMS AND OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING.**

As the Area Agency on Aging, it is the responsibility of Erie County Senior Services to advocate on behalf of older persons by monitoring, evaluating, and commenting on policies, programs and community actions which affect seniors; by representing their interests and concerns to public officials and others; and by coordinating planning with other agencies and organizations to promote new and expanded benefits and opportunities.

This document represents a summary of the first year of a Four Year Plan covering the period 2008-2012 that will be submitted to the New York State Office for the Aging. It represents the Department's objectives and activities for programs funded by the above referenced sources.

Erie County Senior Services remains dedicated to the provision of community-based programs and services that empower older adults to maximize their independence and optimize their well being.

### The Demographic Imperative

Erie County has experienced significant demographic shifts in its population resulting in one of the highest concentrations of seniors in the nation. The following are some of the factors we considered for our planning strategies:

- Over the next decade, the County's overall population is projected to continue to decline while the senior population will grow with the aging of the baby boomers.
- The population cohort age 85 and over will continue to increase dramatically between now and 2015.
- As the population ages and lives longer, the number of people requiring care from formal service providers and caregivers will continue to rise.
- The percentage of people age 75 and over living alone is 42.8% and is projected to increase over time.
- Erie County's older adult population will continue to shift from the City of Buffalo to the first and second ring suburbs.
- The racial and ethnic composition of the senior population will become increasingly diverse.
- While the poverty rate among older adults in Erie County has

declined over the past decade, a growing number of people are economically at-risk and living with Social Security accounting for the majority of their disposable income.

### **Assessment of Need**

In preparation for the development of our Four Year Plan, the Department of Senior Services has engaged in the following activities designed to identify service priorities and better respond to the needs of a growing and ever changing aging population:

- Consulted with our Senior Services' Advisory Board
- Distributed a paper and on-line survey to enable seniors and their families to identify problems and unmet needs, with responses from 2,106 seniors.
- Transmitted an on-line survey to 400 individuals from the field of aging services in Erie County
- Conducted focus groups with representatives of senior centers with an emphasis on members of the Hispanic, African-American, rural, and urban communities
- Analyzed demographic data to identify trends that exist in the senior and caregiver populations.

### **A Summary of Preliminary Needs Assessment Findings**

1. Performing household chores and finding reliable help to perform home maintenance are identified most often by seniors as being "frequently a problem".
2. Focus Groups from area senior centers identified the need for additional transportation and fears for personal safety as the top two issues that are frequently a problem for seniors in their respective communities.
3. Service providers identified transportation and the need for personal care as being the two greatest unmet needs for Erie County's senior residents.

#### **A. ERIE COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES' PRIORTIES FOR 2008**

- Strengthen and promote the Erie County NY Connects point of entry program designed to empower individuals of all ages and families to make informed choices about their long term care options.
- Complete an analysis of the data derived from the needs assessment conducted in 2007 in order to be responsive to the changing needs of older adults.
- Continue work with stakeholders from the P2 Collaborative to align the community around established quality indicators related to growing community health concerns including

cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer, and depression. The primary focus will be on consumer engagement in the community through the promotion of healthy lifestyles and open exchanges of best practices among healthcare providers.

- Advocate for the development of policies, resources, and programs that address the difficulties that older adults find in maintaining their homes and properties.
- Evaluate the transportation pilot project with the Center for Transportation Excellence and continue to engage in efforts that support a more efficient, cost effective, mobility management system for seniors and disabled adults.
- Expand upon the opportunities that older adults have to utilize their talents and skills for their own personal development and the benefit of their communities.
- Work in cooperation with the NYS Office for Aging and Erie County government on the development of performance outcome measures that better assess the programs and services provided by the Department of Senior Services.
- Empower older people to engage in activities that promote health, wellness, and healthy aging.
- Explore viable options that identify a facility that can be used as a commissary for the preparation of food for recipients of the Department's nutrition programs for seniors.
- Expand upon previous efforts that increase the public's awareness of elder mistreatment and the prevention of elder abuse.
- Develop and implement a strategy that educates and assists seniors and caregivers become better prepared to deal with and survive an environmental disaster or emergency.
- Implement computer technology that will serve to fully integrate the flow of all information to and from the various cluster units and outside agencies with the Erie County Senior Services reporting systems.

## **B. ADVOCACY**

### **Goal**

**To promote public policy, legislation, and private sector initiatives which address the needs and priorities of older adults**

Senior Services will strive to advocate for additional resources and modifications in public policy to further promote the independence and optimum well-being for older adults. The following are some of the advocacy issues that will be addressed by Senior Services in 2008:

## **Federal**

- Increased funding for Older Americans Act programs that expand home and community based services, transportation, legal assistance, evidenced-based health promotion, employment opportunities, caregiver support, and nutritional services.
- Support for legislation that provides health care coverage for people age 55-64.
- Passage of the federal Elder Justice Act which creates a national adult protective services system.
- Improve the Medicare program including additional outreach to promote the low income subsidy under Part D, increases in income limits for the Medicare Savings Programs such as QI-1, and additional support to promote health screening and disease prevention efforts.
- Increased funding for transportation via 5310 grants and efforts to improve service coordination via United We Ride.
- Expansion of Medicaid waiver services designed to help older and disabled adults remain in a community setting.

## **New York State**

- Additional dedicated funding to expand transportation options to ensure that older adults can retain their mobility and independence.
- Advocate for increased resources to the major state-funded home and community-based programs for the elderly with an emphasis on the Community Services for the Elderly (CSE), Expanded In-Home Services to the Elderly Program (EISEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Support the "modernization" of the EISEP program that enables it to better respond to the consumer's needs.
- Advocate for increased training and education of medical and criminal justice professionals about aging related issues such as elder abuse.
- Bipartisan efforts to lower the cost of prescription drugs through the use of the bulk purchasing power of the State.
- Incentives for people to prepare for their longevity and possible long term care needs such as the Long Term Care Compact.
- Support the work of the NYS Office for Aging and Department of Health on the restructuring of long term care and the development of public and private sector initiatives that address financing, choice, service delivery and labor force shortages.

## **C. PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

## Goal

**To promote the development of a coordinated and comprehensive system of services for the elderly, especially those with greatest needs, so that they may remain in their own homes and participate fully in family and community life.**

The following are some of the planning and coordination initiatives that will be implemented during 2008:

- In conjunction with the Erie County Department of Social Services, continue to implement Erie County NY Connects, the local point of entry and trusted resource for free, unbiased information about long term care for persons of all ages in Erie County. This will include the provision of core functions of information and assistance, screening, and public education via telephone, e-mail, website and in-person access. The Department will also assist the Long Term Care Council with its strategic planning initiative and assessment of the current system of long term care in Erie County.
- Development of a comprehensive strategy designed to educate and assist seniors enroll in the Medicare Prescription Drug Program, the Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy, EPIC, and obtain other health insurance benefits.
- Strengthen the development of a Long Term Care Insurance Resource Center.
- Continue to work with the Administration on Aging's Performance Outcome Measures Project (POMP) the focus of which will be on analyzing client data and identifying "predictor variables" that allow the aging network to target home and community-based services most effectively.
- Complete the implementation of the plan to consolidate the County's Adult Protective Services program from the Department of Social Services into the Department of Senior Services.
- Plan and implement an Elder Law Fair designed to provide free, objective, information about various legal topics that assist older adults with current and future planning.
- Promote safe mobility for seniors by maintaining a leadership role on Erie County's Older Driver Family Assistance Help Network, supporting continuing outreach to professional and community members, and providing on-going problem-solving assistance to eliminate barriers encountered by concerned caregivers.
- Collaborate with the Community Health Foundation and key stakeholders of the community toward the development of a major, community-wide falls prevention initiative that builds upon the lessons from earlier projects.
- Continue the operation of S.A.F.E (Safety Awareness for Elderly) outreach and education program about elder abuse,

neglect, financial exploitation, and crime prevention. The Department will engage in collaborative efforts designed to educate professionals from various disciplines and will develop and implement policies, protocols, and procedures that serve victims of elder abuse.

- Continue to evaluate its nutrition programs and redeploy resources where warranted, phase out sites experiencing chronic attendance problems, while opening new sites in areas that have identified a growing need for congregate services.
- Expand upon the enthusiastic acceptance of the integration of the senior fitness component into the Stay Fit Dining Congregate Nutrition Program.
- Spearhead a comprehensive health outreach and education project in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture, WNY Food Bank, Erie County Cooperative Extension, Meals on Wheels for Buffalo and Erie County, Southtown Meals on Wheels, and the Farmers Market Coalition.
- Expand the successful Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes that help caregivers deal with the challenges associated with the care of their loved ones.

#### **D. Collaboration with Community Stakeholders**

##### **Goal**

**Senior Services will seek to maintain ongoing cooperative efforts with organizations from public and private sectors in an effort to maximize to the extent possible, all available resources.**

The follow is a partial list of the organizations with whom these collaborative working relationships exist:

- Center for Transportation Excellence
- RSVP Volunteer Transportation Collaborative
- Community Health Foundation of WNY
- United Way of Buffalo and Erie County Aging With Honor
- Network in Aging of WNY
- Erie County Caregiver Coalition
- Erie County Kinship Caregiver Coalition
- WNY Regional Caregiver Resource Center Group
- New York State Assoc. of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers
- NYS Meals on Wheels Association
- Hartford Foundation, Community Advisory Board to Buffalo State College School of Social Work
- Erie County Council on the Disabled
- Erie-Niagara Tobacco Free Coalition
- Coalition for Advance Healthcare Decision Making

- WNY Adult Immunization Coalition
- Partners for Prevention
- New York State Coalition on Adult Abuse, the Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence
- The Financial Crimes Task Force
- Multidisciplinary Coordinating Council on Elder Abuse
- Health Literacy Collaborative
- Workforce Investment Board
- American Diabetes Association
- Arthritis Foundation
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Erie County Physical Activity Collation

## **E. SERVICE OBJECTIVES**

### **Goal**

**To enable seniors to remain in their homes with a high quality of life for as long as possible through the provision of home and community-based services including supports for family caregivers**

In line with the above considerations, the Senior Services will maintain current programs, making changes as needed to reflect the changing needs of the consumer. These services include:

#### 1. Access Services

To evaluate and improve methods of providing information and assistance to persons 60+ and their families, and to offer information to the general community on needs of and services to the elderly.

To continue outreach activities to link older persons to community services, benefits, and entitlements.

To facilitate and assist in the development of a county-wide, transportation and mobility management system designed to assist older adults who are unable to utilize conventional means of transportation to access health, nutrition, and income maintenance services.

To maintain a county-wide system of case management services for the elderly that operates with the cooperation of community-based agencies.

2. In-Home Services

To maintain the level of in-home services available to functionally impaired older persons, including homemaker/personal care and housekeeper services.

To continue to provide, under contract with community agencies, chore maintenance, and telephone assurance services.

To continue to provide home-delivered meal services for frail and handicapped persons unable to prepare adequate nutritious meals on their own in cooperation with the Buffalo and Erie County Meals on Wheels, Inc. and the Southtowns Meals on Wheels programs.

3. Congregate Services

To provide hot noonday meals to the elderly at 47 dining sites throughout the county and continue to expand service to underserved rural and urban seniors.

To provide nutrition education and healthy meal preparation demonstrations to older adults.

To expand upon existing efforts which enhance the quality of congregate dining sites and increase levels of participation. This will include the increased involvement with the University at Buffalo's Dietetic Program. Student interns will assist by providing nutrition education to congregate dining participants.

To implement the Farmer's Market Coupon initiative providing low and moderate income seniors with fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer months.

To continue support for social adult day care providing care for frail and impaired elders in a supervised setting while also serving as a respite program for their care givers.

4. Legal Services

To continue to provide legal advice and representation to older persons, as well as to grandparents and relatives age 60 and over who serve as primary caregivers of children through a contract with Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged of WNY.

5. Other Programs and Services



To maintain the provision of Protective Services for Older Adults, including case management, financial management, guardianship, and in-home services to older persons at particular risk of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.

To continue operation of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, contributing thousands of hours of volunteer services to community organizations and to increase the number of volunteers in "high impact" sites such as child literacy and community revitalization.

To provide information to older adults and their caregivers on matters pertaining to health promotion and disease prevention and coordinate these efforts with other community-wide efforts such as the Passport to Wellness Walks, Tobacco-Free Coalition, the Coalition for Health Care Decision Making, and the Health Literacy Collaborative.

To expand employment opportunities for older adults through the coordination of resources available to Supportive Services Corporation(SSC) and the Senior Jobs, Senior Aides, and Senior Community Service Employment Programs, as well as the Workforce Investment Board.

To assist older adults meet their basic housing needs and work in cooperation with Catholic Charities of Buffalo to coordinated the services provided by the Housing and Supportive Services Program with existing case management services.

To maintain, in conjunction with the Elizabeth Pierce-Olmsted, MD Center for the Visually Impaired (formerly the Blind Association of WNY) Senior Vision Services, providing assessment, counseling, and aid to elderly with vision impairments.

To support the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program operated by the American Red Cross assisting older persons in nursing homes to resolve problems.

To continue the Department's Wise and Well Program's efforts to build seniors' self-care skills in the following areas: medication safety and documentation, maintaining a personal health record, and advance health care planning.

The Department's Caregiver Resource Center (CRC) will continue to promote the "Alzheimer's Proofing Your Home" project that provides a free, confidential in-home,

customized assessment for caregivers of memory impaired individuals and suggestions for home modification and personal safety. This will include updating and improving information dissemination to the public and service providers via its enhanced website at [www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices/](http://www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices/) and the Caregiver Coalition's website at [www.eriecountycaregiver.org](http://www.eriecountycaregiver.org)

Copies of the complete Annual Implementation Plan will be available for review after January 10, 2008. Written comments regarding the plans for services to older adults contained in this Abstract will be accepted until November 18, 2007. For further information, please contact the Erie County Department of Senior Services, 95 Franklin Street, Room 1329, Buffalo, New York 14202-3968, (716)858-7253.

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