

REMARKS OF
JOSEFINA CARBONELL
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AGING
ADMINISTRATION ON AGING

TO THE

Title VI Training and Technical Assistance Forum

April 28, 2005

Marriott Gateway Hotel
Arlington, VA

This text is the basis of the oral remarks of the Assistant Secretary for Aging. It should be used with the understanding that some material may be added or omitted.

- Welcome to Washington, DC. I am pleased to see you, and I am very glad that so many of you could take advantage of the training and technical assistance that have been provided over the last three days.
- I will take the next two or three minutes to announce a few items, and bring you up to date on some activities that AoA has undertaken on behalf of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian elders.
- As many of you know who have attended previous listening sessions, my main job today is to listen to what you have to say about your needs, thoughts, and, yes, concerns. *(Ad lib: The first thing I did in this office was to hold listening sessions throughout the country, and as you can see, hearing from you is as much of a priority now as it was then).*
- I am very pleased to announce today that AoA has awarded almost \$30 million in grants to support vital community programs and services for tribal elders and their caregivers. We awarded 236 grants to tribal organizations representing over 300 tribes.
- Now, I know that funding has fallen for some of you from previous years. This has happened because of increases in the number of organizations funded and changes in population. However, nationally, funding has improved.
- In the last three fiscal years, from 2003 through 2005, we have provided over \$80 million in funds for nutrition and supportive services activities.

- This amount is over \$12 million and 18 percent higher than the amounts provided for these services during the three preceding years (2000 to 2002).

- And that 18% increase does not include the over \$18 million in funding provided to support the services to caregivers of American Indian and Alaska Native elders.
- In other words, in a time of very strict budget constraints, we have been able to provide funding for the core program services at levels that are historically high, and to fund your caregiver programs as well.
- And we are pleased with the results you produce with those funds. You provide three million meals to almost 100,000 elderly people each year. And although we do not have an unduplicated estimate of the additional elderly people you serve with supportive services, we do know that you provide over 630,000 rides, over 675,000 hours of information and outreach, and over 730,000 hours of personal care, chore and homemaker services and other in-home services.
- We also know that you are making significant progress in establishing caregiver programs to support those who help the elderly maintain their independence.

- As with elders across the U.S., an increasing number of American Indian and Alaska Native elders prefer to remain in their homes, communities, and on reservations. Our programs provide them and their caregivers with services that allow them to do exactly that.
- You are participating in other ways also to support the elderly people you serve. We are pleased to see significant input from Native Americans to the White House Conference on Aging.
- In fact, I am pleased to provide you with a list of American Indian Delegates to the White House Conference on Aging. They are:

Haunai Apoliona, Native Hawaiian

Nonie Apolonia, Alu Like

Connie Bremner, Blackfeet Nation/Blackfeet Nursing Home

Frank Chee Willetto, Navajo Nation

Kathy Correa, Laguna Pueblo

Larry Curley, Navajo

James De La Cruz, Quinault Indian Nation – Chairman of NICOA

Joe Garcia, San Juan Pueblo

Maudean Harden, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Cynthia LaCounte, Turtle Mountain Chippewa

Gloria Jetty Lefthand, Spirit Lake Dakota

Bruce Jones, Lumbee

Juana Majel, Pauma/Yuima

Wendell McLester, Oneida Nation

Elsie Meeks, Oglala Lakota

Margaret Moss, Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara

Cecilia Nez, Navajo

Regis Pecos, Cochiti Pueblo

Buford Rolin, Poarch Creek

Sally Smith, Yupik

Helen Spencer

Steve Wilson, Muscogee Creek

- Lastly, I would like to note that AoA's partnership with CMS on behalf of older Indians continues to grow.
- The organizations within the Aging Services Network are central partners with AoA, CMS, and the Social Security Administration as we help Medicare beneficiaries access new benefits under the Medicare Modernization and Improvement Act of 2003 (the MMA).
- Together, we have provided funds to NICOA to get the message out to older Indians and their families.
- The new drug benefit under the MMA will go into effect on January 1, 2006.
- In the months leading up to that date, our role will be critical, as we move from providing awareness about the new drug benefits to the enrollment of beneficiaries in plans that are appropriate for them.
- Our shared mission provides us with a historic opportunity to work together to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries can make informed decisions about their health-care coverage.
- We at AoA will continue to work with you and NICOA to make this effort work for the elders you serve and represent.
- Thank you very much for allowing me to share some information with you today, and now I would like to hear from you.