

2010 Annual Conference & Exposition

Communities: Inside Out

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**aging services
of california**[®]
Advocating Quality Senior Living and Care

RESIDENT agendaTM aging services of california[®]

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State Budget Proposal Threatens Fee Hikes for CCRC, MLRC Residents

At the request of labor unions and for-profit nursing homes, the California legislature implemented a federally authorized tax on skilled nursing providers in 2005. At that time, the state exempted skilled nursing care associated with continuing care and multi-level retirement communities from paying the provider tax, known as a quality assurance fee. Foremost among the reasons for this decision was the fact that the fee would have unfairly penalized Californians who had made advance arrangements and put away savings to pay for their own healthcare in retirement, as CCRCs and MLRCs would have been forced to pass along the unforeseen cost on an ongoing basis.

Older adults living in such communities now face the prospect of paying this unplanned-for cost increase which they were spared in 2005, as Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal for the 2011 California State budget would likely extend the quality assurance fee to the previously exempt CCRCs and MLRCs. If this happens, the implications for residents could be significant.

The quality assurance fee is calculated against a community's total number of patient days in its skilled nursing facility. The calculation is derived by summing up the number of days used by all types of payers – private pay, Medicare, Medi-Cal, managed care, and so on – throughout the course of a year. For communities with less than 100,000 patient days per year, the current fee

is \$11.16 per patient per day. Put into context, a community with a relatively small skilled nursing facility of 30 beds with an occupancy rate of 90 percent would be required to pay an annual fee of nearly \$110,000. If the community as a whole had 200 residents, the cost to each resident would be an additional \$553 per year.

"We need residents to help defeat this proposal, which in essence is a tax on retirement savings," says Jack Christy, director of public policy for Aging Services. "We expect the governor to try to impose

the quality assurance fee on CCRCs and MLRCs as part of the May revise of his 2010–2011 budget or by inclusion in a budget trailer bill. Neither mechanism will leave us much time to organize in opposition. Because we believe the fee will be put forward in this way as a stealth proposal, we must be well informed and prepared to act on very short notice."



Aging Services staff will be making presentations to region meetings, resident councils and other gatherings of members to explain the fee and to help fight the elimination of the exemption. The association has invited member institutions to review their events schedule for the next three months to identify a meeting where it would be appropriate to brief their communities on this urgent topic. Additionally, the association will host a residents luncheon as part of its annual conference coming up next month in Long Beach, Calif.; this proposal will no doubt be a hot topic at the luncheon. For additional information or to book a presentation for your organization, contact Christy at jchristy@aging.org or 916-469-3366.

Public Policy & Advocacy Report

AAHSA 2010 Homecoming Week: Who Decides the Future of Aging?

As we begin a new decade that will see a radical shift in the demographics of aging in the United States, older adults – including the readers of *Resident Agenda* – have the wisdom and experience the nation needs to answer a key question: “Who should decide what the future of aging could and should look like?”

The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging launched its Homecoming Week two years ago in an effort to help residents share their stories in response to pressing questions of just this sort. Through events ranging from senior proms to Memorial Day barbecues, older adult communities have embraced the opportunity to open their doors and invite the broader community to see the future of aging services.

This year’s AAHSA Homecoming Week is set for May 31 to June 4. Residents interested in learning more about Homecoming Week – or maybe even helping their community plan an event – can follow up with the staff at their community. They also can download a detailed toolkit that contains activity ideas, sample invitations and more to help plan, promote and successfully execute an event. The toolkit can be found on the Aging Services of California website at www.aging.org.

Are You Subscribed to the Aging Services Online Resident Forum?

Aging Services of California recently launched a new listserv specifically for residents of member communities. This forum is an opportunity for you to stay connected with updates from the association – without having to step outside the comfort of your home. If you are interested in learning more about the Resident Forum or would like to subscribe, send an e-mail to membership@aging.org. Please include in the message your full name as well as the name of your community.

Awards for Advocacy Efforts

At its 2010 Public Policy Conference held in March, Aging Services of California recognized individuals who are helping create the future of care for elders. State Senator Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) received the Senator of the Year Award for his work on finding permanent state funding for the development of affordable homes. Anthony Portantino (D-Pasadena) was named Assemblymember of the Year for authoring AB 123 on behalf of the association; the law makes it easier for residents of affordable senior housing to obtain community-based services. And the Advocate of the Year Award was presented to the Resident Legislative Committee at Paradise Valley Estates in Fairfield, Calif.



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Aging Services of California represents more than 400 nonprofit providers of senior living services – including affordable housing, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living, skilled nursing, and home and community-based care. Aging Services of California’s advocacy, educational programs, communications and other resources help its members best serve the needs of more than 100,000 seniors.

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News Briefs

A National First: California Hearing on Technology and Aging

In conjunction with its recent Public Policy Conference, Aging Services of California sponsored the first legislative hearing anywhere in the United States on the use of technology in aging services. The joint hearing, convened by the Senate Subcommittee on Aging and Long-Term Care and the Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care, was organized in cooperation with the Center for Aging Services Technologies, the Continua Health Alliance and the California Association for Health Services at Home (CAHSAH).

The hearing opened with Aging Services CEO Joanne Handy explaining the need for increased use of technology from the nonprofit provider’s perspective. Joe Hafkenschiel, president of the CAHSAH, spoke about technology in home health care. Brian DeVore of Continua spoke of the need to address healthcare costs through the use of technology. David Lindeman of the Center for Technology and Aging, Oakland, Calif., spoke about the benefits of technology for older adults and emerging trends in the field.

The second panel focused on telehealth and personal emergency response systems. Speakers included Ben Wilson of Intel, Alan Little of SCAN Health Plan, Long Beach, Calif., and Barry Berger of Accredited Nursing, Woodland Hills, Calif. The group discussed ways technology has reduced costs from the HMO and health plan perspectives. In addition, Berger spoke about his experience with the Lifeline Emergency Response System and the Phillips Remote Telemonitoring system.

The third panel addressed the latest in activity and behavioral monitoring technologies. David Stern of GE QuietCare reported how the product helps older adults continue living in their homes by improving remote health monitoring. Sheri Peifer of Eskaton, Carmichael, Calif., reported on deployment of the product in her communities.

The fourth panel outlined current

technologies in brain fitness. Monica Anderson of Dakim Inc., Santa Monica, Calif., reported on how their technology can reduce the occurrence of Alzheimer’s disease and other types of dementia. Kari Miner-Olson of Front Porch, Burbank, Calif., spoke about the use of the Dakim product offered by his firm in their communities.

The final panel outlined next steps in the field and looked at the ways California policy could be changed to ensure that supportive technology for the older adult population is more widely adopted.

The hearing agenda, handouts and testimony can be found on the Aging Services website at www.aging.org (enter “Tech Hearing Handouts” in the search field).

Mourning the Loss of a Long-Time Resident Advocate

It is with a tremendous sense of loss that Aging Services of California reports the death of Jean Bilderback Wright, a former member of the association’s board and a long-time resident advocate. Born on Oct. 16, 1923, Jean died on Sunday, Feb. 7, 2010, at The Sequoias, San Francisco, where she and her husband, Bill, had lived for 28 years. She was surrounded by her husband and her children – John, Deborah and Rusty, along with Rusty’s wife, Meg.

Call for Papers: JAMA Issue on Caring for an Aging Population

The October 2010 issue of the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* will focus exclusively on issues related to caring for an aging population. To that end, JAMA has issued a call for papers on topics including improving the health and quality of life of elders through better care, improving care delivery in the primary care setting, enabling flexible patient-centered care to support older patients and their caregivers, and helping patients continue living independently. For additional information or to submit a paper, visit the JAMA website at www.jama.com/instructions.