

# "The Senior Outlook"

..... A Quarterly Publication of the .....

## Older Iowans Legislature

*Pursuing Quality of Life for Iowa's Senior Citizens for the past 34 years  
Iowa's ONLY Independent Voice for Iowa's Rapidly Growing Body of Senior Citizens*

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News & Views – From the Older Iowans Legislature - FEBRUARY 2012 Issue 21

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- OIL Board members and how to contact them

#### ***OIL Priority Bills Introduced in the Iowa Legislature*** **Restore funding for DOA and Triple A's**

Senate File 2051. Introduced by Bolkcom on January 24, 2012 and referred to Senate Appropriations Committee. A bill for an act relating to the department on aging and making appropriations.

#### **Parity reimbursement for HCBS**

On January 17, 2012 the Senate Human Resources Committee assigned Senate File 2010 (A bill for an act relating to home and community-based services under the medical assistance program) to a subcommittee of Hatch, Boettger, and Ragan. *Continued, p5*



**IL Mission Statement:**  
The Older Iowans Legislature is a non-partisan non-profit corporation registered in the State of Iowa. Our

primary purpose is to improve the quality of life of Iowa's Seniors. We place special emphasis on the frail elderly; those citizens who have contributed much to our society, but have exhausted their resources and are in need of assistance to lead meaningful life.

### Chair's Corner



The State Board has had two meetings since our legislative session in Sept. These meetings have centered on developing partnerships with AARP, Iowa 4-A's and Department of Aging. Outcomes of these meetings include our bills having accurate facts and figures, bills that are more likely to be passed by the Iowa General Assembly and a coordination of priorities within these organizations. We have developed a plan to advocate our priorities which includes sending information to all the legislators before the session begins and encouraging all O.I.L. members to contact their representatives to advocate for our cause. Feb. 13, 2012 we will be teaming with the Iowa 4-A's for an advocacy day at the State Capital.

Membership and representation on the State Board continues to remain a concern. Please try to recruit folks you know. Even if they are hesitant about attending meetings, their name on our membership roll gains us more credibility. We need representation from several districts on the board. We now have only Central, North, North West, South West, South South East and South East represented.

Our meetings have been very productive and increased representation would only improve our productivity.

Keep Advocating.

Ron Donald, OIL State Chair

# ***OIL priorities are being introduced in the Iowa Legislature***

**By Mike Otto**

Delegates to the 2011 OIL Legislative session told the board to find new methods to promote our priority bills to improve their chances of influencing legislation in the upcoming session of the Iowa Legislature. Your board listened. We asked like-minded organizations to meet with us to develop a coordinated plan of action promoting our similar legislative goals. AARP and the Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging (i4a) agreed to meet with us and the Iowa Department on Aging agreed to assist us in gathering accurate supporting data.

We believe diverse agencies uniting to tell one story will have a much greater impact on legislators than each agency presenting similar proposals with conflicting data. We think that the partnerships we are forging are producing results that can have long term benefits for seniors.

The 2012 Legislative session is young but as we are going to press two of our four priority bills have been introduced and assigned to committee into at least one chamber of the Iowa Legislature. Hopefully our other priority bills will also be introduced.

As you know having legislators assign a file number to a piece of legislation incorporating all or part of our priorities is just the beginning. It's a very important beginning, but still, it's just the start of a very long process before any of our priorities actually become law. This is where you can help. OIL Secretary Ron Jome will track the progress of our proposals and notify us when committee action is scheduled and the legislators handling the legislation. You can find the e-mail addresses of all legislators elsewhere in this newsletter. Take the time to send them a message in your own words explaining why they should support our proposals. As seniors, we walk the walk every day. It's now time for us to talk the talk as well.

## **Legislature Leadership 2012 Session**

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*President Pro Tempore:* [Jeff Danielson](#)  
*Majority Leader* [Michael E. Gronstal](#)  
*Majority Whip:* [Thomas G. Courtney](#)  
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*Minority Leader:* [Jerry Behn](#)

*Minority Whip:*  
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*Assistant Minority Leader:*

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[David Johnson](#)  
[Tim L. Kapucian](#)  
[Roby Smith](#)  
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*Speaker:*  
*Speaker Pro Tempore:*  
*Majority Leader:*  
*Majority Whip:*  
*Assistant Majority Leader:*  
*Assistant Majority Leader:*  
*Assistant Majority Leader:*  
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*Editor's Note – I apologize for the small type on the following, but it was necessary to fit the Outlook column size. I would suggest you copy it and print in out on a new file so you can adjust the type to one you can easily read. I had to cut segments of the e-mail address extensions as well. The proper extensions for the House and Senate are noted above each block of legislator. The files are sorted by county.*

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General Assembly: 84 (01/10/2011 - 01/13/2013)

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# HF-45 Reorganization Goes Forward With 5 District Triple A Plan – What It Means for Iowa Seniors

Submitted

On 3/7/11, Governor Branstad signed and the Legislature passed HF-45-a Plan for reduction in the number of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) did submit a plan for reducing the number of AAA's in the state, effective July 1, 2012. The Plan will be submit by IDA to the Standing Committees on Human Resources of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Joint Appropriations subcommittee on Health and Human Services. This is all currently in process.

Currently, there are 13 AAA's throughout Iowa. IDA held Community Conversations in several counties throughout the state and one of the topics was to receive input on HF-45 as well as to hear of other challenges aging Iowans are facing.

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, Director Donna Harvey from IDA, submit a Plan to Iowa Commission on Aging, recommending a Map showing 13 AAA's, merging into 5 new AAA's. A public hearing was held January 6, 2012 in Des Moines for comments regarding AAA Reorganization.

The AAA Reorganization Plan was presented to the Senate Human Resources Committee on 1/12/12. Senators brought questions forth regarding the size of the proposed new Area 1 Agency (Western Merger) and asked for further clarification.

The Commission on Aging was then presented two options on 1/13/12, by the Department on Aging, based upon four comments received at public hearing held January 6, 2012; two comments in favor of the recommended Planning and Service Area map and two comments in favor of splitting Area 1 into two areas.

The Commission on Aging voted on 1/13/12 to move forward with option 1, 5 PSA's (Planning and Service Areas) coinciding with 5 Area Agencies.

The Department on Aging Timetable clarified that each of the 5 new AAA's will need to write a Request for Application (RFA) depicting and designing a PLAN for services in their respective Planning and Service Areas/Agencies. Other community entities within the state may also submit RFA's if they are able to meet the requirements for providing services within the context of those currently being provided to seniors within Iowa. A multi-disciplinary team will then review RFA's and choose those entities that will be named as the new 5 AAA's PSA/Area Agencies on Aging).

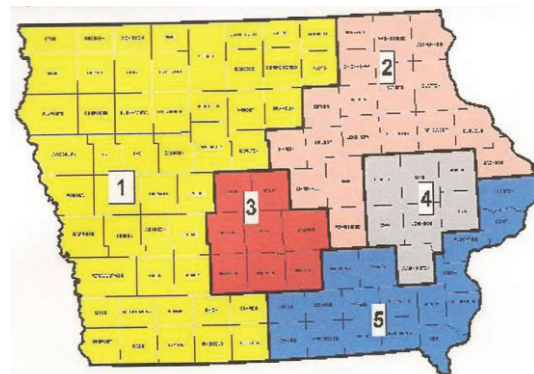
There are also some legal bills that have been filed that need to be submit to both chambers of the House and Senate that will be discussed soon regarding AAA's and some technical issues as well.

AAA's may experience name changes when merging and some staff titles/duties may change as well. **Our focus continues to be that of serving aging Iowans to the best of our abilities in order that they maintain a quality of life at home as long as possible.**

Discussion by Iowa State Department on Aging concerning Chapter 4 in particular, state that, "after analysis and review of this rule making, no impact on jobs has been found".

The reorganization is expected to take 2-5 years until completion. For consideration when merging, there are several things to consider, but most importantly, the impact on providing the same services to seniors and in the best, most efficient and effective manner as well as a way to measure whether this indeed happens. We hope to continue our grassroots way of providing services and find other ways to assist seniors as well. Other considerations are organizational in nature and involve: employee health coverage, retirement benefits, salaries, computer programs to measure how we are assisting seniors and if the services are being met, communications, merging Board of Directors, Advisory Councils etc.

As AAA's move forward through this reorganization process, we ask for your support and patience. If you have questions, please contact the AAA in your region. We would be glad to answer any questions you have. Our focus is on **seniors!** That will always remain true!



*A proposal to split District 1 into two separate districts was not approved leaving one mega district across the western half of Iowa intact.*

## **Legislative Actions important to seniors**

### **Continued from p1.**

#### **Parity Reimbursement for HCBS**

Senate File 2053

By Bolkcom, Quirnbach, Mathis, Wilhelm, Jochum, Ragan, Danielson, Seng, Dotzler, Hatch, Horn, Fraise, Courtney, Beall, Gronstal and Schoenjahn.

An act relating to reimbursement for services provided under a medical assistance home and community-based services waiver.

#### **RE: Parity Reimbursement for HCBS**

##### **E-mail to Bob Welch**

Thanks for your e-mail. We are taking a look at this proposal. Right now, we are awaiting a response from the Department of Human Services on the financial impact of making the change proposed here. Once we get that information back from DHS, I will be happy to share it with you.

House Majority Leader Linda Upmeyer, R-Hancock

#### **Senate File 2051 financial requests:**

##### **Reinstate funding for DOA and Triple A's**

- \$29,942,577 for 35 full time equivalent positions
- \$450,000 for delivery of long-term care services to seniors with low or moderate income
- \$179,946 transferred to department of economic development for RSVP program
- \$11,850,000 for meeting the mandate of the Olmstead decision to provide home and community based services and thus reduce long term care
- \$2,500,000 for statewide aging and disability resource center
- \$2,600,000 for elder abuse intervention and protection
- \$390,000 to support reduction in AAA's as required
- \$2,300,000 for unmet needs of seniors

**House File 2073** (A bill for an act relating to the use of the elder index to determine provision of services and programs for older individuals.) was introduced by Hunter on January 23, 2012 and referred to Human Resources Committee and a subcommittee of Schulte, Hunter, and Jorgenson.

"This bill relates to the use of the elder index in determining eligibility for programs and services under the purview of the department of elder affairs pursuant to the federal Older Americans Act.

The bill defines "elder index" and directs the department on aging to amend the state plan on aging and submit the amended plan to the United States administration on aging for approval to allow the use of the elder index in determining eligibility for programs and services under the state plan. If the state plan amendment is approved, the department on aging is directed to use the elder index in determining eligibility for all needs-based programs for older individuals under the department's purview and require each area agency on aging to use the elder index in preparing needs assessments and in the development of each area agency on aging plan. Iowa department on aging is directed to update the elder index annually following approval."

#### **OIL Priority Bill – Strengthen Assisted Living Facilities**

Senate File 2060

By Bolkcom

A bill for an act relating to services provided by assisted living programs and requiring the adoption of rules. Not yet introduced and referred to committee as of Wednesday January 25.

#### *Legislator acknowledges OIL Priority Bill Letter*

Mike,

Thank you for the letter highlighting the Older Iowans Legislature's priorities. I appreciate the effort that goes into selecting the issues on which to focus and look forward to an opportunity to move them forward. Please do not hesitate to contact me about these or any other issues. I also send a weekly email update on issues at the Capitol. If you wish to receive just let me know.

Best regards,

Representative Tyler Olson, D-Linn

#### **OIL members are the boss**

Unlike some much larger senior advocacy organizations, OIL members meet annually to write, debate and vote on issues important to seniors. You set the agenda. You provide overall direction to the board.

Many other organizations work from the top down and tell members the priorities they've set.

So if someone asks what you get for your OIL membership. Tell them you get a seat at the head table.

You'll even have your own microphone if you come to Des Moines and help us debate the issues. If you haven't paid your 2012 dues, send Francis a check. He loves to get that kind of mail.

## 2012 OIL Dues Information

The Iowa General Assembly is back in session and your OIL Board has worked hard to get our priority bills to the right legislators for action this year. Each one of our members (this means you) will need to keep in contact with your legislators and encourage them to support our priorities for the seniors of Iowa. There are expenses for materials involved besides all the volunteer hours it takes for our advocacy. This is the beginning of a new year, so I'm asking for you to renew your membership now for 2012 if you haven't already paid. Dues are \$25 per individual and \$250 per professional organization.



The Older Iowans Legislature is funded solely by your dues and funds from our Shining Star Agencies. We are a non-profit organization, so all dues are tax deductible. Donations are also very welcome.

Please send your check payable to OIL to:  
Francis Thom - OIL Treasurer  
205 S 10th St  
Centerville, IA 52544

## Your Input Is Needed For Future Outlook Issues



This is very much your newsletter and nothing could make it better than to have articles and comments that are important to you and OIL in it. Please send me articles, stories and information that you

feel other OIL members would be interested in reading. You don't have to wait for the next issue. Send it to me whenever you're thinking about it and let me worry about being able to find it when I need it. As with any publication, space often dictates what and when something is published. Official notices of meetings and the action taken will take precedence. As a former newspaper editor, publisher and owner and now as editor of this publication, I know I'll offer my opinion from time to time, but I promise I'll try to keep it to a minimum. Thanks for your continued support.

Mike Otto

## Older Iowans Legislature

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*We want to thank the Heritage Area Agency on Aging for their ongoing generous help printing this document four times yearly and thanks to Aging Resources of Central Iowa for serving as the OIL "Host Agency"*