

Commissioner's Corner
December 17, 2009



A Look Back with an Eye Forward

As 2009 comes to a close, the Bureau staff has been busy compiling data for the annual report. I have just completed my first reading of the document and must say it has been a very busy and successful year. I would like to dedicate this column to the services and service providers around the state that have made this year a record breaker.

During 2009, twelve new hot/cold meal delivery trucks and seven passenger meal delivery vans were added to the seventeen funded last year. These vehicles have opened new meal routes and increased sites. Last year, over 2,500,000 meals were served to seniors in both congregate sites and through home delivery.

The Bureau was awarded a hospital demonstration grant designed to reduce hospital readmissions of seniors through home- and community-based services. The participating hospitals, ADRCs and county providers will work to ensure in-home services are provided in a timely fashion. Titled *VITALS*, this grant will be an evidence-based project with control and pilot hospitals collecting data.

West Virginia SHIP (State Health Insurance Program) launched a new website, www.wvship.org, to assist individuals and families with Medicare issues. Over 2,200 individuals have visited the site to date.

The Bureau partnered with the West Virginia Health Care Association to publish the *2009 Consumer Guide-Helping Families Make Informed Choices about Care*. This handy pocket guide provides contact information on programs and services available to seniors statewide.

The Alzheimer's Outreach and Registry Partnership between the Blanchette Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute; WV Medical Association Foundation;

Alzheimer's Association, WV Chapter; and the WV Bureau of Senior Services was started this fall. The goal of this partnership is to improve diagnosis and treatment for West Virginians with Alzheimer's and other related dementia.

Many seniors and their families have used services provided through the Bureau and grantee providers. Here is a brief look at the programs and the contact numbers for the year:

- The Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are funded totally from state dollars. Last year, ADRC staff assisted 11,089 individuals with long-term care needs.
- The Bureau's website had 31,742 visitors.
- More than 350 seniors from 32 counties participated in the 2009 Robert W. Jackson Senior Conference at Cedar Lakes.
- Eight position papers were adopted by the 2009 Silver Haired Legislature.
- 173,400 hours of service to 1,508 caregivers and individuals with Alzheimer's were served through FAIR.
- LIFE (Legislative Initiative for the Elderly) programs served 15,373 individuals providing 215,234 hours of service. Additionally, 108,155 one-way units of transportation were provided.
- More than 2,300 seniors received over 450,000 hours of Lighthouse services.
- 34,687 seniors received over 2.5 million meals in their homes or local senior center.
- Medicaid programs: Personal Care served 5,330 members; Aged and Disabled Waiver served 6,449 members; Personal Options served 400 participants reaching a targeted goal; and the Transition Initiative enabled 28 individuals to return home from a long-term care facility.
- 13,000 individuals were served through the Medicare Call Center.
- Older Americans Act programs served 49,681 senior West Virginians and an additional 1,665 families received caregiver support.
- 39 individuals were transitioned into unsubsidized employment and 106,219 hours of employment support for non-profit organizations were provided through the Senior Community Services Employment program.

- 24,860 voucher booklets were distributed statewide helping seniors eat healthy through garden seeds packets, fresh fruits and vegetables and other fresh market items.
- 1,037 monitoring visits to 270 long-term care residential visits were conducted by the WV Long-Term Care Ombudsman program.

The West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services staff members visited every county this year – speaking with seniors, monitoring both federal and state programs, and providing technical assistance, financial oversight and support. Through partnerships, the Bureau has worked on educating physicians and other medical personnel on topics of aging. Presentations at state conferences to discuss older worker issues, facts and figures on aging, and collaboration increased the Bureau’s visibility statewide.

It has been a very busy year and 2010 presents with many challenges including budget issues, increased demand for services and quality statewide workforce staffing issues. I am fortunate to have knowledgeable and dedicated colleagues at the Bureau to tackle these concerns as we work with providers statewide to serve seniors with programs that assist them with aging-in-place. And is not that what we all seek - the opportunity to remain in our own homes surrounded by friends and family, involved in community projects and activities. The benefits for these programs far outweigh the challenges and everyone at the Bureau is looking forward to continuing to serve more seniors in 2010.

On behalf of everyone at the Bureau, I wish you and your family a Happy New Year.

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Commissioner
WV Bureau of Senior Services

