

# The Senior Advisor

VOLUME #8

ISSUE #1

WINTER 2019

## Senior Advisory Group Central Michigan

A grass roots organization able to shape advocacy for any issue important to older adults and/or people with disabilities.

Membership includes:

- People who use senior services, their families, friends, and caregivers.
- People who work in or who are retired from careers in long-term care.
- Family caregivers
- General public
- Participants and family who are served by the MI-Choice Home & Community-based Waiver program.

If you have ideas or thoughts on any aging issue and would like to receive the Senior Advisory Group meeting schedule, or want to comment on something, call Annette at 1-800-858-1637 or [jeskea@region7aaa.org](mailto:jeskea@region7aaa.org).



Region VII Area Agency on Aging  
1615 S. Euclid Avenue  
Bay City, MI 48706

1-800-858-1637  
[www.region7aaa.org](http://www.region7aaa.org)



Region VII AAA is accredited by The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities for Aging Services Network, Case Management and Home and Community-based Services.



## Medicare Dental Benefit Bill Introduced—Advocacy Needed!

*On January 3, Senator Ben Cardin from Maryland introduced S.22, the Medicare Dental Benefit Act of 2019—a bill that, if enacted, would allow older adults and persons with disabilities to access their oral healthcare as they do their medical care—through Medicare.*

During the past four years, Oral Health America, along with partners in aging, health policy and dental organizations, have worked together to advocate for adding a dental benefit to Medicare Part B under a shared commitment to improve health and well-being of Medicare beneficiaries. S.22 recognizes that oral health is connected to total body health by covering services that are necessary to prevent disease and promote oral health, restore oral structures to health and function, and treat emergency conditions. A provision under Medicare Part B signifies that all beneficiaries would receive coverage, including those in Medicare Advantage plans.

People face many barriers when it comes to accessing oral healthcare including a lack of educational resources and the ability to pay for needed care. Additionally, poor oral health has multiple implications relative to other chronic diseases. Poor oral health impacts nutrition as well as mental and social health and the ability to live independently in the community. Through OHA's Tooth Wisdom®: Get Smart About Your Mouth community workshops, hygienists are equipping older adults with tips on how to maintain a healthy mouth while aging. At the beginning of class, participants are asked why oral health is important to them. One Chicagoan exclaimed, "To kiss!" "For Oral Health America, S.22 is more than adding dental and oral health services to Medicare Part B; it's about ensuring people can take part in their day to day activities like eating nutritious foods without pain, playing with their grandchildren without embarrassment and feeling confident about kissing their significant others!" says Beth Truett, President & CEO of Oral Health America.

OHA commends and thanks Senator Cardin for his steadfast leadership and support in improving oral health access across the lifespan. Working alongside other advocates, Oral Health America looks forward to attaining the bipartisan support needed to pass S.22 in Congress. Learn more at <http://www.oralhealthamerica.org>



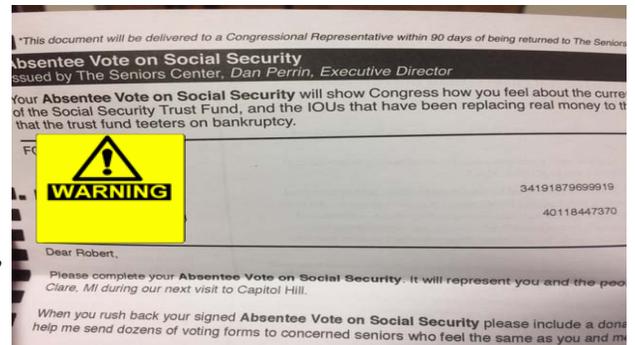
## More than 1,000,000 meals served!

Region VII Area Agency on Aging is pleased to report that along with the units on aging in Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac and Tuscola counties, they provided more than a million meals last year using Older Americans Act, state and local funds, and donations and contributions from volunteers. Participants are invited to make a donation which averages \$2.50/per meal to help defray costs.

Commonly referred to as “Meals on Wheels”, a program that exists throughout America, and was launched by the 1965 Older Americans Act. Last year, 2/3 of the meals were delivered to people who are home bound, while the remainder were served at congregate dining sites. Each meal is one-third of the recommended daily nutrition for a person age 60 or older. Menus are posted in advance and many dining sites offer a variety of activities and entertainment before or after the meal. Invite a friend to accompany you to a dining site, or if you are home bound and would like a hot typically noon day meal delivered, call your local service provider or contact Region VII AAA at 1-800-858-1637.

## Solicitation Alert!

People around the region have reported receiving a letter asking for a donation and their “*Absentee Vote on Social Security*.” This is a solicitation from a Washington D.C. based lobbying organization. These lobbyists are not affiliated with Region VII AAA, your local aging services, senior centers, or dining sites.



## Need Help Paying For Medicare Part D

Extra Help is a low income subsidy that helps Medicare beneficiaries pay their Medicare Part D monthly premium, annual deductible, coinsurance, and copayments. To qualify for Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs, a person must be receiving Medicare, have limited resources and income, and reside in one of the 50 States or the District of Columbia. The value of this subsidy is estimated to be about \$4,900/year.

If you are a single person with an income of \$1538 a month or less and assets that are \$14,390 or less, or you are part of a married couple whose income is \$2078 or less each month and combined assets of \$28,720 or less you may wish to inquire about this subsidy which can lower or eliminate the premium and deductible on your Medicare drug plan and keep costs lowered if you end up in the coverage gap (doughnut hole).

***Apply online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov), or call the Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAAP) at 1-800-803-7174***

## Help Plan the future of aging services

Home and community-based aging and long-term care services available to people age 60 and older are funded in part by the federal Older Americans Act of 1965. This includes nutrition programs, caregiver training and senior center activities in your community. To make sure the money is used for its designated purpose, Region VII AAA submits a required plan that outlines how we intend to meet the goals of the Michigan Aging and Adult Services Agency.

Goal 1: Improve the quality of life for people who rely on aging services.

Goal 2: Reduce loneliness and isolation in older adults, especially those who are home-bound.

Goal 3: Reduce the number of emergency room visits and hospital stays made by older adults.

Goal 4: Make sure that older adults have access to nutritious and affordable food every day, and reduce the number of people who do not drink enough fluids to stay hydrated.

If you have thoughts on how services for older adults might be improved or you have an idea for a service that doesn't currently exist, contact us.



1-800-858-1637



jeskea@region7aaa.org



AIP/MYP  
Region VII AAA  
1615 S. Euclid Ave.  
Bay City, MI 48706

Additional opportunities for public input and comment will be available as the planning process continues.

## LGBT Grant Ends, Work Continues...

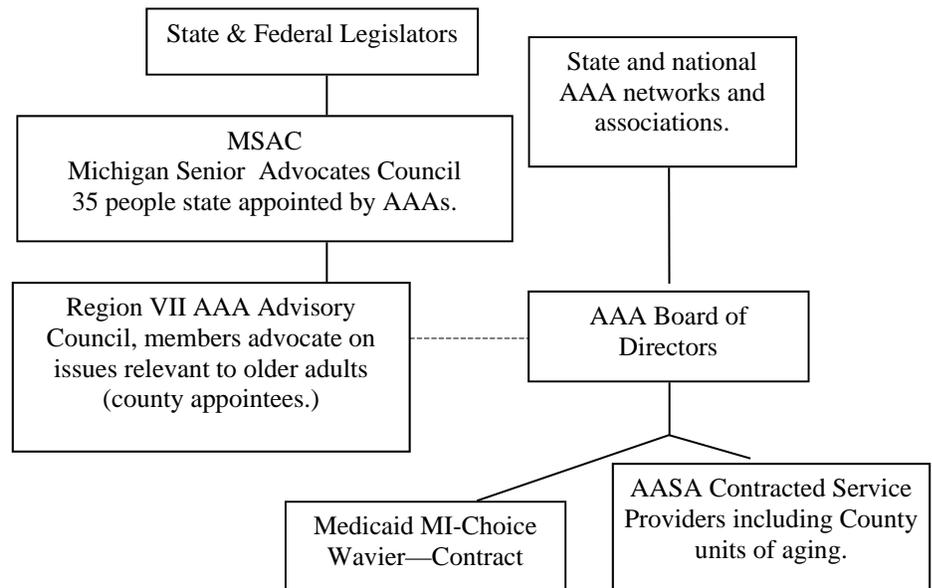
Region VII AAA and Perceptions, the regional LGBT organization, recently met the goals of a two-year project funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund that sought to reduce isolation and improve care to Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender older adults.

Goals included: Updating human resource policies to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Training staff on how to improve care for LGBT older adults, and creation of a resource directory of LGBT affirming businesses and organizations. Persons seeking LGBT resources may call Region VII AAA to speak with an Information and Assistance specialist, visit our website for a directory of LGBT friendly businesses and organizations <https://region7aaa.org/aging-services/> or contact Perceptions at <http://www.perceptionsmi.org/>

**Gay older adults are less likely than the general population to have children, a spouse or care partner later in life.**

## What is an Area Agency on Aging

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) were established as the result of an amendment to the 1965 Older American's Act to create a delivery system and structure for services to America's older adults. There are over 600 AAA's throughout America charged with the mission to advocate, plan, and support a comprehensive system of quality care and services designed to assure the optimum level of health, well-being and independence of people as they age. Information at: [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)



Nursing Home Ombudsman  
Lakeshore Legal Aid  
**1-866-485-9393**

Adult Foster Care, Home for the Aged  
or licensed Assisted Living complaints  
**1-866-856-0126**

Michigan's Central Intake for abuse,  
neglect or exploitation of any person  
**1-855-444-3911**

Learn more about supports and ser-  
vices for LGBT older adults  
**1-800-858-1637**



## Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program **1-800-803-7174**

**MI Choice—If your monthly income is \$2313  
or less, you have \$2,000 or less in assets not  
counting a house and a car, AND you need  
help at home, call today.**

**Help may be available at no cost to you**

**1-800-858-1637**

*Looking for help with aging or long-term care, call  
Region VII AAA at 1-800-858-1637*