

# Creating Community for a Lifetime Roadmap

## Recommendations—Awareness of Services

### Access

#### Goal 1

Increase the number of older adults and their families who are aware of and have access to appropriate cultural- and age-sensitive information that enables them to make informed choices about community programs and services.

#### Objectives

- Develop a user-friendly system for accessing the aging information and referral system:
  - Provide multiple access points (e.g., kiosks or other computer access throughout the community; 211; partner with area libraries and others to expand access to information and services, etc.).
  - Use multiple communication media to meet the needs of persons with hearing, vision, language, and reading difficulties.
  - Provide three-way calling service to enable continuity when transferring callers.
- Foster the expansion of the 211 information and referral system through effective planning and coordination.
- Expand the types of information collected to increase the usefulness to more individuals:
  - Include information on caregiving, financial planning, employment, wellness, leadership development, volunteer activities.
- Improve the effectiveness of the information base of aging resources through use of technology and planning:
  - Enable shared access to the database.
  - Provide links to assessment, intake and consumer-directed care options.
  - Use a common taxonomy.
  - Provide real time information.
  - Include private pay services as well as publicly funded ones.
  - Include health services information to create an integrated system with “no wrong door.”
- Provide information on aging services through existing locations and groups including city and county offices, churches, schools, local clubs such as the Torch club and the Women’s City Club.
- Ensure access to information and assistance by targeted groups including the isolated and homebound.
- Integrate with community efforts to promote cultural understanding (e.g., through international centers, training, programming, etc.) to enhance their awareness of

## ***Communication and Promotion***

### **Goal 2**

Increase awareness among all parts of our community of the value and contributions of older adults as well as the services for older adults.

### **Objective**

Create media campaign with a focused message that is delivered by providers and others in an ongoing way.

## ***Organizational Capacity***

### **Goal 3**

Strengthen aging and health service provider capacity to receive and share information that is useful for diverse client populations.

### **Objectives**

- Support improved information and referral capacity through certification efforts and continuous quality improvement including feedback opportunities for older adults.
- Create internal structures within the aging network to encourage research and strategic planning.
- Leverage community efforts to promote cultural understanding (e.g., through international centers, programming, etc.) to enhance the cultural sensitivity of aging service providers, processes and systems.
- Increase participation of community health professionals in the West Michigan Alliance for Gerontology Education.
- Provide training on the unique needs of the elderly and their service issues to organizations that serve as points of information and contact for older adults (e.g., government offices, libraries, and churches). This could be done through a community speakers bureau of experts in aging.
- Increase training for providers of older adult services on: the continuum of services available within the network, eligibility and referral processes, and information available via the Internet (e.g., the 211 web site, etc.).

## ***Empowerment***

### **Goal 4**

Encourage community-wide recognition of the value of older adults.

### **Objectives**

- Create opportunities for older adults to demonstrate leadership.
- Build on national promotional campaigns that address stereotypes and negative images, or foster social engagement.

## **Awareness of Services** continued

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- Provide opportunities for older adults to engage in community initiatives.
- Increase the number of older adults who share the experience, perspective, changes, and needs of older adults by participating in community, business and civic planning and serving on government committees.
- Use social marketing to increase community awareness of the value, contributions, and needs of older adults.

### **Work Group**

#### **Co-Chairs**

Suzanne Filby-Clark ▪ Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan  
Bob Haight ▪ Heart of West Michigan United Way

#### **Members**

Tim Allard ▪ Alzheimer's Association  
Kelly Berendsen ▪ Kent County Administrator's Office  
Scott Blinkhorn ▪ Visiting Nurses Association  
Barb Coleman ▪ Gerontology Network  
Anita Christopher ▪ United Methodist Community House  
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