

# HUMAN SERVICES

## COUNCIL ON AGING

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## COUNCIL ON AGING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The population of Americans over 60 is continuing to soar, and the Commonwealth has shared in this growth and has seen the number of seniors in Massachusetts growing from 1,096,567 in the year 2000 to 1,273,186 in 2010. The staff and volunteers of the Concord COA are working hard to try to keep pace with the demand as the number of Concord seniors also continues to rise. This shift in population in our country and in our community will require us to be creative and ever vigilant in all areas of service provision over the next few decades as we strive to serve the existing senior population and the millions of baby boomers who will be entering their senior years.

According to the January 2011 Town Census, there are 4,248 Concord residents over the age of 60 and this represents 27.18 % of the total population of Concord.

The mission of the Council on Aging is to promote a good quality of life for Concord's seniors by helping them to maintain their dignity, self-esteem, personal independence and their roles as full participants in the life of the community. The COA strives to fulfill this mission by providing opportunities for seniors to enhance their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being.

## COUNSELING AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Our social work and outreach staff are educated and trained to provide professional counseling and as-

sistance with specialized resources that are helpful to seniors and their families. The staff is able to provide consultation, assessment and advice to seniors living in Concord as well as to out-of-town friends and relatives of Concord seniors who have concerns. They have a strong working knowledge of the agencies that offer viable resources that help seniors to age gracefully and continue to live independently as long as possible. The staff is also available to the adult children of seniors for assistance with their aging parents. Our nurse is available for individual consultation.

COA currently sponsors three different support groups: Bereavement, Caregiver and Digestive Disorders.

The social work/outreach staff is trained to assist with the application process for federal fuel assistance.

The staff encourages participation in our Lock Box program where seniors can have a lock box installed on the outside of their home with a key inside that emergency personnel have access to in case they need to enter the home in an emergency.

The COA continues to maintain strong working relationships with various Town departments, local hospitals, home health care agencies, aging services access points, the local housing authority, local banks and businesses. As a result, these departments and organizations are a major source of referrals to the COA of seniors in need of assistance and support.

## WELLNESS AND FITNESS

The COA is proud to offer a wide variety of program and fitness opportunities that contribute to the overall health of Concord seniors. We currently offer the following classes and exercise opportunities: Aerobics, Stretch and Flexibility, Senior Yoga and Chair Yoga, Tai Chi, Zumba Gold, and Chi Gong.

We offer regular blood pressure clinics, podiatry clinics, blood sugar clinics, hearing screenings and flu clinics, and bring in a wide variety of speakers on a myriad of health topics.

COA offers the Safe Meds at Home program where seniors receive individual assistance with medication management. COA maintains an inventory of durable medical equipment that is loaned out free of charge.

## **SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Providing opportunities to interact with peers, meet new friends, stay intellectually active and enjoy life are key components in delivering a well-rounded and comprehensive program. The COA provides multiple meal occasions throughout the year where seniors can get a nutritious meal and enjoy the company of others. We currently offer the following regular programs: Book Discussion, Bridge, Coffee and Conversation, Pool, Cribbage, Music Makers, International Current Events, Drama Club, Bingo, Senior Shaker Tambourine group, COA Cinema, Mahjong, Memoir Writing Group, and Octogenarian Plus group. We offer educational classes on computer use, cell phones, Facebook, Skype and Digital Photography. We maintain a lending library and a fully equipped computer lab.

### **COA TRANSPORTATION**

The COA vans provide door-to-door service for seniors. The van is available Monday – Friday from 8:40 AM to 4 PM. The van takes individuals to medical appointments, the grocery store, pharmacy, hairdresser or the bank, just to name a few destinations. Additionally, the van provides transportation to COA-sponsored activities and special shopping trips. This service enables many Concord seniors to live more active and independent lives.

### **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

The COA offers a monthly “Ask the Lawyer” program. We have trained SHINE counselors to help seniors with issues related to their health insurance. AARP offers a tax assistance program. Our volunteer coordinator organizes spring and fall clean up and the delivery of buckets of sand. There is even a seamstress available for mending and hemming!

### **COA VOLUNTEERS**

The more than 170 wonderful COA Volunteers are vital to the day-to-day function of the COA. Without their assistance, it would not be possible to provide as many services as we do. We are always looking for individuals who would like to give of their time.

## **ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The COA is especially grateful to the following funding sources for their strong commitment and financial support of our work:

The Concord Friends of the Aging is a private non-profit organization that does fundraising in order to support the programs and activities of the COA. The Friends sponsored several functions for seniors including meals, speakers, refreshments, and supplies. They provided the funding for the File of Life, and covered the cost of the annual Veteran’s breakfast. The Friends has graciously fully furnished the computer lab with all new equipment. They have also been supplying the Town with the vans to support the transportation needs of seniors.

The Formula Grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs provides partial funding for COA Programs. In FY2012 the grant totaled \$29,162.50 and subsidized the following positions: Wellness Coordinator; Outreach Coordinator; Activity Coordinator. This grant also allows a small amount for volunteer recognition.

Generous funding from the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest provided partial funding for the following positions: Volunteer Coordinator, Mental Health Worker and Outreach Coordinator.

### **HARVEY WHEELER COMMUNITY CENTER**

The Harvey Wheeler Community Center serves as the home for the Council on Aging. The building is also used by the Recreation Department for the preschool and after school care programs. Additionally, Harvey Wheeler is used extensively during the evenings and on the weekends by many different Town departments, not-for-profit groups and private groups and individuals. Every 6 weeks we are proud to display the works of various Concord artists in our main hallway.