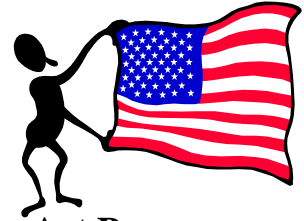


## History of the Older Americans Act



### **Chronological Evolution of National Older American Act Programs and State of Oregon Programs**

- 1920** The Civil Service Retirement Act provided a retirement system for many government employees.
- 1935** The Social Security Act passed which provided Old Age Assistance and Old Age Survivors Insurance. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated when he signed it, he called this Act “a cornerstone in a structure which is being built but it is by no means complete.”
- 1937** Railroad Retirement Act provided pensions for retired railroad employees and spouses.
- 1950** President Harry Truman initiated the first National Conference on Aging, sponsored by the Federal Security Agency. President Truman was quoted as saying, “Millions of our citizens do not now have a full measure of opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health. Millions do not now have protection or security against the economic effects of sickness. And the time has now arrived for action to help them attain that opportunity and help them get that protection.”
- 1952** First federal funds were appropriated for social service programs for older persons under the Social Security Act.
- 1956** Special Staff on Aging established within the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, to coordinate responsibilities for aging.
- 1958** Legislation was introduced in Congress, calling for a White House Conference on Aging.
- 1959** Housing Act authorized a direct loan program for non-profit rental projects, for the elderly at low interest rate, and lowered the eligibility ages for public-low-rent housing for women to age 62.

- 1960** The Social Security Administration eliminated age 50 as minimum for qualifying for disability benefits and liberalized the retirement test and the requirement for fully insured status.
- 1961** The first White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington D.C.
- 1961** Social Security Amendments lowered the retirement age for men from 65 to 62, liberalized the retirement test, and increased their minimum benefits and likewise increased benefits to aged widows.
- 1962** Legislation introduced in Congress, to establish an independent and permanent Commission on Aging. Statistics showed that there were more than 18 million Americans over age 65. Most of them had low incomes and were threatened by illness and medical expenses they could not afford.
- 1965** The Older Americans Act was signed into law on July 14, 1965. This act established the Administration on Aging within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and called for the creation of State Units on Aging. This act was considered one of the most important contributions of aging legislation enacted by Congress.

At the signing of the Older Americans Act, President Lynden Johnson said, “No longer will older Americans be denied the healing miracle of modern medicine. No longer will illness crush and destroy the savings that they have so carefully put away over a lifetime so that they might enjoy dignity in their later years. No longer will young families see their own incomes, and their own hopes, eaten away simply because they are carrying out their deep moral obligations to their parents, and to their uncles, and to their aunts. And no longer will this nation refuse the hand of justice to those who have given a lifetime of service and wisdom and labor to the progress of this progressive country.”

Medicare, Title XVIII, a health insurance program for the elderly was established as part of the Social Security Act. At that time, the Medicare premium after age 65 was three dollars per month. Medicaid, Title XIX, a health insurance program for low- income persons was established as part of the Social Security Act.

**1967** Older Americans Act (OAA) was extended for two years, and provisions were made for the Administration on Aging to study the personnel needs in the aging field.

**1967** The Age Discrimination Act was signed into law.

Governor Tom McCall appointed the first State Committee on Aging.

**1969** OAA Amendments provided grants for model demonstration projects, Foster Grandparents, and Retired Senior Volunteer Programs.

The Program on Aging moved to Salem with \$110,000 for 30 pilot projects.

**1971** Second White House Conference on Aging was held. Oregon was one of six states to get demonstration grants.

**1972** A new Title VI was created under the OAA authorizing funds for a national nutrition program for the elderly.

**1973** The OAA Comprehensive Services Amendments established Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). The amendments added a new Title V, which created grants to local community agencies for multi-purpose senior centers. The amendments also added Title IX, which created the Community Service Employment program for low-income persons age 55 and older.

Comprehensive Employment and Training Act was enacted and included older persons.

Title VII OAA legislation passed which established the congregate meals program.

**1974** Title XX of the Social Security Amendments authorized grants to states for social services. These programs included protective services, homemaker services, transportation services, adult day care services, training for employment, information and referral, nutrition assistance, and health support.

OAA amendments added transportation under Title III model projects. Housing and Community Development Act was established, which provided low-income housing for the elderly and disabled, pursuant to the Housing Act of 1937.

Also, the Farm and Rural Housing expanded to include the rural elderly as a target group.

**1975** OAA amendments authorized grants under Title III to Indian Tribal organizations. Transportation, home care, legal services, and home renovation/repair were mandated as priority services.

In Oregon, AAAs were first designated throughout the state.

**1978** OAA amendments consolidated the Title III AAA administration and social services, the Title VII nutrition services, and the Title V multi-purpose senior centers into a new Title III and added a new Title VI grants to Indian Tribal organizations. The old Title IX became Title V, the Community Service Employment program.

OAA amendments required each state to establish a Long Term Care Ombudsmen program to cover nursing homes.

**1981** Third White House Conference on Aging was held.

OAA was re-authorized and emphasis was placed on supportive services to help older persons remain independent in the community.

In Oregon, Senior Services Division (SSD) was formed, combining the Office of Elderly Affairs and Long Term Care (LTC) units of Adult and Family Services (AFS), allowing the AAA's the option to provide LTC services.

**1987** The Omnibus Budgeting Reconciliation Act, also called the Nursing Home Reform Act, provided for reform in the areas of nurse's aide training, survey and certification procedures, pre-admission screening (PAS), and annual reviews for persons with mental illness. This act mandated that nursing facility residents have direct and immediate access to ombudsmen when protection and advocacy services become necessary.

Simultaneously, when the OAA was re-authorized, states were charged to guarantee ombudsmen access to facilities and patient records, provide ombudsmen legal protections, designate local ombudsmen, and provide adequate legal counsel for ombudsmen programs.

- 1989** In Oregon, SSD became Senior and Disabled Services Division (SDSD). Legislation was passed, providing the option to transfer services for persons with disabilities to local governments.
- 1990** The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law providing wide-range legislation intended to make American society more accessible to persons with disabilities. This included the domains of employment, accessibility to public services, accessibility to public accommodations, including transportation, telecommunications services, and anti-discriminatory measures.
- 1992** The re-authorization of OAA increased the focus on caregivers, inter-generational programs and protection of elder's rights.
- 1995** The fourth White House Conference on Aging was held. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OAA, Medicare, and Medicaid programs and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Security Act was celebrated.
- 1996** The Older Americans Act expired on September 30.
- 2000** The Older Americans Act was finally re-authorized after four years without legislation. In the OAA 2000 amendments, the National Family Caregiver Support Program was established, as were requirements that AAA's must provide medication management information and services to older adults.
- 2001** HB2294 passes and the Oregon Dept. of Human Services (DHS) was reorganized into a single Department with integrated service delivery systems. SDSD became Seniors and People with Disabilities (SPD) combining the former agencies; Office of Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Disability Determination Services, and Senior and Disabled Services.

**2003** Oregon, like many other states suffered from increasing budget deficits. HB5100 and the failure of Ballot Measure 28 forced SPD to make drastic cuts in services and benefits. Within five months, the General Assistance program and the Medically Needy program were eliminated; Oregon Health Plan terminated coverage of numerous benefits, such as dental, mental health and drug treatment, and reduced prescription benefits for thousands of people. SPD was further mandated to eliminate six levels of service priorities. All of these actions impacted thousands of frail and vulnerable individuals.

**2005** SB 870, the OPI Modernization Act, is enacted by the Oregon Legislature. This legislation expands allowable OPI services, includes people with disabilities as an eligible population, establishes the OPI Fund as a Treasury Account separate from the State General Fund, and provides for the transfer of excess revenues from the Senior Property Tax Deferral Program to the OPI Fund. Federally, the Older Americans Act expired on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Money for OAA programs continues to be allocated by continuing resolutions. The fifth White House Conference on Aging was held.

Today, because of these efforts, 43 million, or one in six, Americans live to see their 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. There are now 3.5 million Americans, who are 85 or older. In Oregon alone, there are nearly 58,500 adults over age 85. Most adults can plan to enjoy about 14 years of retirement with a degree of economic security and quality of life that few of their predecessors could experience.

However, the needs are growing, as the aging population increases. Of the 9 million Americans over age 65, who live alone, nearly a quarter of them have no one to turn to if they need help. Caregiving issues are becoming a national concern as the need for them multiplies. The response and focus of the OAA programs continues to evolve as creative solutions are pursued.

Despite this severe setback in the state aging and disabled services network, Oregon is committed to remain the leader in innovative and cost-effective programs and services. Already, SPD is researching collaborative initiatives that will create new long-term care models, accessing resources outside of federal and state funds to meet the needs of our growing aging and disabled

client populations. As other states experience similar budget shortfalls and loss of funding for critical services, they continue to look west to see what Oregon is doing.