

**Testimony for Administration on Aging  
2011 Reauthorization of Older Americans Act  
Dallas, Texas, Site Listening Tour  
February 18, 2010**

**Presented by  
Annette Graham, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association**

Good afternoon and thank you Assistant Secretary on Aging Kathy Greenlee for allowing me time to provide testimony on the 2011 Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. I am the Executive Director of the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging in Wichita, KS. My comments today are on behalf of the eleven Kansas Area Agencies on Aging. As the Administration on Aging develops the positions and identifies changes to be recommended for the Older Americans Act, we recommend that the following areas be addressed.

**1. Local Flexibility**

Increase the flexibility in funding to allow for additional customization of services and care for seniors and caregivers at the community level, and as it relates to the funding of home delivered and congregate meal services. This will enable the Aging Network—Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI organizations-- to ensure that community needs are addressed and that available resources are maximized. This flexibility will allow for creativity, program enhancements and development of new models that address the unique and changing needs that we experience in our communities.

**2. Enhance and strengthen the following core services provided under the Older Americans Act through the Aging Network:**

- 1) Information and assistance,
- 2) Case management,
- 3) Home and community based services and supports.

The population age 60 and older will increase dramatically over the next 25 years and the need and demand for these critical services will sky rocket. These services are provided through the well developed and trusted network of Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI agencies. It is the network established under Older Americans Act in 1973 and the one that the community recognizes and supports. This network needs to be strengthened and funding increased to ensure that needed services are available for the increasing number of consumers and caregivers as more than 77 million baby boomers reach age 65 starting in January 2011. These core services are vitally important in ensuring that seniors and caregivers are empowered in identifying service needs, understanding their options and choices and obtaining the in home services supports they need to remain in their homes and communities.

**3. Integrate Project 2020 into the Older Americans Act**

Project 2020 will strengthen our national network to meet the needs of an aging population, save funds at the federal, state and local levels, move the rebalancing of long term care ahead, provide support and services to older adults and people with disabilities, build on the single entry point model, expand the provision of evidenced based health promotion and disease prevention activities and enhanced nursing home diversion programs. These are all important components to integrate into the Act to enable older adults and individuals with disabilities to get needed support, empower them to make informed decisions and to conserve and utilize their own resources for care in the community.

**4. Strengthen the Aging Networks role in coordination of long term support services and integration of medical and community based services that enable individuals to remain in the community.**

The Older Americans Act should promote and increase funding for the Aging Network's important role in health, wellness and prevention. This is an area that will require additional attention as the need for coordination and integration of medical and community based services is so critical at the transition points of hospital discharge and as a result of the growing epidemic of obesity and diabetes. Over the last 35 years, AAA's and Title VI Native American aging programs have developed the infrastructure that provide access to, and coordination of the services and supports that assist older individuals in their choices to remain in their homes and communities—and also supports and sustains unpaid family caregivers in their important roles. The Aging Network consists of established and trusted community based agencies that provide services which are responsive to the needs of older adults and their families.

**5. Build upon and strengthen the unique role that Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI aging program have in the communities.**

Promote, broaden and adequately fund the role Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI organizations play with city and county governments and organizations to promote livable communities and coordinate the planning activities necessary to prepare for the changing demographics our nation will experience. Strengthen the role of the Aging Network in developing partnerships, promoting livable communities and assisting communities to prepare for the impact of the increasing numbers of seniors on health services, aging services, transportation, public safety, workforce development, economic development, recreation and volunteerism/civic engagement and policies.

**6. Revisit the allowable administrative rate amount.**

Increase the administrative rate to reflect the reality of increased cost of administering and managing the Older Americans Act programs. This amount has not been increased for many years. During this time, the cost of conducting business, new and not-so new unfunded mandates, the cost of supplies, staff and other expenses have dramatically increased. The allowable administrative

rate should be increased to provide the Aging Network adequate funding to cover actual costs incurred.

Thank you for providing this opportunity for input into the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. Your openness in this process and your desire to include partners and stakeholders is appreciated.

Annette Graham, LSCSW  
Executive Director, Central Plains Area Agency on Aging