Senior-Friendly Mecklenburg
COUNCIL on AGING
YOUR SOURCE AND VOICE ON SENIOR ISSUES
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The mission of Council on Aging is to transform Charlotte-Mecklenburg into a *senior-friendly** community through education and advocacy.

CURRENT EMERGING ISSUE STATUS REPORT

DATE: June 2009

IDENTIFIED ISSUE: PROJECT 2020

Our aging population is increasing tremendously. In 2008, there were 52 million people aged 60 and older. In 2020, one in six people will be age 65 or older. The U.S. Administration on Aging (AOA) and other government agencies has begun to develop long-term care initiatives to address the healthcare needs of an increasingly aging population and generate savings in Medicare and Medicaid. One such initiative is known as Project 2020.

CURRENT SITUATION:

One of the main goals of Project 2020 is to help the aging network be more consumer-centered and have cost effective long-term care strategies, ultimately working to improve the quality of life for older adults. This includes: services provided through person-centered access to information, evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion programs, and enhanced nursing home diversion services.

If implemented across the nation, the Project 2020 program is estimated to have a gross federal savings of $2.7 billion. States will also experience significant savings.

- **Person-Centered Access to Information:**

  Project 2020 would provide funding to states for either the development or maintenance of Aging & Disability Resource Connections. (In North Carolina, the ADRC is known as Community Resource Connections or CRC. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the connection is called **Aging & Disabilities Community Resource Connection** – *Serving Mecklenburg County*). ADRCs provide individuals and their families with access to reliable information assisting consumers in making informed decisions about their options regarding long-term care. This would also include an education component to help people prepare, in advance, for their future long-term care needs through counseling, planning and care management.

Target recipients: Anyone interested in long-term care (older adults, caregivers, people with disabilities, younger generations wishing to plan for the future, etc.).

- **Evidence-Based Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Programs:**

Interventions have been developed, with the aging population in mind, to improve the health and well-being of older individuals. The involvement of expensive health care settings is not required. These interventions have been developed by the health and behavioral sciences and provide older adults with low-cost, clinically tested methods for behavior change that have demonstrated improvement in various aspects, such as reduced chronic disease, falls and malnutrition.

Targeted recipients: Individuals who are 60 years or older, who might be at risk of chronic illness, disability, etc.

- **Enhanced Nursing Home Diversion Programs:**

This component of Project 2020 is targeted to individuals who are at risk of spending down their assets in order to qualify for Medicaid. Funds would be given to each state in order to provide personalized support to individuals in need of home and community-based services. Home and community-based services include, but are not limited to, home-delivered meals, homemaker services, personal care, medical transportation, home modification, assistive technology and adult day care. The main purpose is to help individuals remain in their homes and community, rather than being institutionalized.

Targeted recipients: Individuals who are at 300% SSI with approximately $25,000 in assets who are in need of consumer-directed community care.

COUNCIL ON AGING EDUCATION/ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Council on Aging, along with 32 other organizations/agencies in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, is actively involved in the development and implementation of an Aging & Disabilities Community Resource Connection (nationally known as an Aging & Disability Resource Connection) for the community. This local CRC initiative will operate similarly to the ideology of Project 2020's Person-Centered Access to Information program component.
- Review the Advocacy Alert created on this issue.
- Learn more about the local **Aging & Disabilities CRC** – *Serving Mecklenburg County* initiative. Click here.

RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Read more about Project 2020.
- Project 2020 - overview.

- Project 2020 – Frequently Asked Questions
- Project 2020 – Funding

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Are you a service provider? A caregiver? An aging adult? Your input is needed! Get connected with the local Aging & Disabilities CRC initiative! Contact Kellie Gonyar at Council on Aging.
- Print and share this information. Help Council on Aging raise awareness about Project 2020 by making this information available to your community, organization, friends and loved ones.
- Contact Council on Aging's Speakers Bureau to set up a presentation on this issue.
- Donate today to help ensure a *senior-friendly* tomorrow.

*A *senior-friendly* community allows aging adults
to maintain independence, dignity and quality of life.