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NEWSLETTER

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New Directions Highlight Evidence-Based Practice

Under the leadership of the Rose Dobrof Acting Executive Director, Marianne C. Fahs, PhD, MPH, The Brookdale Center on Aging (BCoA) is taking new directions in its development of timely research, health policy, training and educational programs for older New Yorkers, applying the principles of **evidence-based practice** to its work. In 2001 the Institute of Medicine defined evidence-based medicine as “the integration of the best researched evidence and clinical expertise with patient values.”

As the medical and health policy fields have moved toward more research-based clinical practice, there is an increasing need for gerontological policy and practice to build evidence-based models to influence policy and funding decisions. The national importance of moving the field in this direction was underscored in July 2006, with the announcement of a \$15 million grant from Atlantic Philanthropies to the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA), to administer a state-wide competition for demonstration projects of evidence-based management of chronic care in community-based settings. As the leader of President Bush’s Healthier US Initiative, which encourages people to take control over their health to live longer and healthier lives, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Mike Leavitt has identified preventive care and chronic disease management as priority issues.

organizations at the community level, will empower older people to take more control of their own health through life style and behavioral changes that have proven effective in reducing the risk of disease and disability among the elderly,” said Secretary Leavitt. “Simply put, this collaboration will put the results of our research investments into the hands of older people so they can use it to improve the quality of their lives.”

This sentiment has been echoed by HHS Assistant Secretary for Aging Josefina Carbonell, who has stated, “Aging services providers are in a unique position to recognize and ensure that effective prevention programs are available to older people, including underserved populations who often need the programs the most.”

Accordingly, BCoA is cementing its role as a leader of timely, ground-breaking approaches to aging research and policy by bridging traditional senior care services and programs with policy development, and using established transdisciplinary science as a catalyst for the development of interventions and community-based partnerships aimed towards increasing successful aging in New York City neighborhoods. Most notably, the Center is collaborating with New York State in receiving the first of

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“This new partnership, led by the AoA and involving several HHS agencies, states, and various public and private



New BCoA Mission Statement

Early in June 2006, the Center developed a new **mission statement** to reflect its new directions. For the past three decades, the Center has taken the lead in identifying the needs of older New Yorkers, developing programs to make New York a better place to grow old, training professionals and paraprofessionals who serve the elderly, and championing both the elderly and policies to promote successful aging. As a multi-disciplinary

center of excellence, BCoA serves as a critical bridge between gerontological education, research, policy, practice and advocacy. The new mission statement builds on this outstanding tradition, providing a platform for new leadership to advance policies and financial support to better meet the wide spectrum of needs of our rapidly aging communities.

New Mission Statement:

BCoA is a multi-disciplinary center of excellence dedicated to the advancement of successful aging and longevity through research, education, and evaluation of evidence-based models of practice and policy.

“BCoA serves as a critical bridge between gerontological education, research, policy, practice and advocacy”

DFTA-BCoA Team Conducts First Assessment of Senior Health Status

In its efforts to identify the needs of older New Yorkers, BCoA has implemented a pilot **health status assessment of seniors** attending ten senior centers in New York City in collaboration with the Department for the Aging (DFTA). Propelled by the realization that no data exist on the health status of this important sector of New York City, the DFTA/Brookdale team has embarked upon the first assessment of health status, utilization patterns, barriers to health care, and health problems of older adults. Consequently, a better understanding of the health status of elderly New Yorkers will assist in the future planning of social and health care services, raise awareness for the need of adequately trained health care professionals in geriatrics, and promote future research to advance our knowledge of the health status of older adults – all encouraging improved health and increased independence for the elderly to live successful and productive lives in their communities.



Public Advocacy At Work

BCoA has long been known as a strong public advocate for both the elderly and policies to promote successful aging. In particular, financial abuse is an area of elder abuse which has recently been brought to the public's attention by the **Brooke Astor case**, in which an elderly woman and well-known philanthropist was suspected to have been financially exploited by her adult son. The case underscores the need for a comprehensive evaluation of existing daily money management programs which aim to protect the financial viability of vulnerable older adults., much like Ms. Astor herself.

As such, the Center is currently working with the AARP and the Tuttle Fund on a project to design and develop a state-of-the-art scientific assessment of the value of **Daily Money Management** programs by conducting an evaluation of the costs and outcomes of the programs by agency staff and volunteers on clients living in the community.

The proposed methodology is transdisciplinary, including original data collection through a comprehensive survey of program resources, client characteristics and outcomes, focus groups, and court case record reviews, expert

consensus, and cost-effectiveness analysis.

The results of the assessment will provide the most reliable data to date on the economic and social value of money management programs among vulnerable seniors.

The project, entitled "The Value of Daily Money Management Programs (DMMPs): An Assessment of Costs and Outcomes," will begin on January 1, 2007, with Marianne C. Fahs, PhD, MPH, as Project Director and Debra Sacks, LPN, JD, as Project Co-Director.

"The Center has long been known as a strong public advocate for both the elderly and policies to promote successful aging."

New Certificate Program in Law and Aging

The Center is developing training curricula to prepare professionals and paraprofessionals serving the elderly. In particular, the Center is announcing that beginning in 2007 they will be offering a new **Certificate in Law and Aging**. The program seeks to educate non-lawyers about the ins and outs of the legal system and how it can be used to help enhance the lives of seniors. The program and its courses will provide both a legal framework and a practical approach to dealing with senior clients. Moreover, it seeks to provide a vital understanding of the complex world of elder law, entitlements and estate and financial planning for the elderly. Classes will be taught by experienced practitioners in the fields of law and finance. Students will be able to choose among courses in four core subject areas including Finance, End of Life, Housing Options, and Benefits.

Announcements

- ◆ BCoA has recently been awarded a grant from the Administration on Aging for a project examining the impact of the **Medicare Senior Medical Patrol (SMP) Integration program**. The award is for \$80,000. The goal of the project is to enhance the reporting of Medicare, Medicaid and other health care error, fraud and abuse by expanding Medicare's SMP program to populations previously unaware of and/or unable to participate because of linguistic and/or cultural barriers. This project will inform Chinese Americans within selected communities – two in New York and one in New Jersey – receiving Medicare, Medicaid or other health care benefits about the Medicare SMP program, and develop culturally and linguistically-appropriate training and outreach materials for use in SMP programs in all states with Chinese American populations. The expected outcomes of this project are that non-English speaking Chinese American older adults will better understand the health care services covered by Medicare and Medicaid, how to identify healthcare errors, fraud and abuse, and how to report them to the appropriate authorities. The products from this project will include a final report with evaluation results, training and outreach materials and model media presentations in Chinese, abstracts for national and regional SMP conferences, a tool kit for SMP projects to use with non-English speaking Chinese Americans, and presentation charts of all data collected during the Project.
- ◆ The Center is also proud to announce that its Senior Research Associate, Dr. Nina S. Parikh, was chosen to be one of its Junior Investigators for the **Robert Wood Johnson New Connections Junior Investigator Program**. The award is for \$50,000. The award will support Nina's research investigating the health status of older individuals, and effects of the built and social environment on the health and health trajectories of the elderly, in particular those of immigrant populations. The focus of this award is on the individual, social, cultural, and economic determinants of access to and utilization of health care among immigrants.

Staff News

- ◆ BCoA is proud to announce the appointment of its new Director of Certificate Programs, **Deborah Corenti, RN MS**. Ms. Corenti is a Master's prepared RN with extensive experience in clinical and non-clinical education and program start-up and management. She most recently served as Student Liaison of Healthcare Careers at White Plains Hospital Center, where she was responsible for developing and implementing a grant-supported program with the major goals of increasing the diversity and the number of RNs in the local workforce. Ms. Corenti was previously Vice President for the Academy for Healthcare Education at Impact Communication Inc., where she administered an accredited division of medical communications company ensuring all certified activities adhered to accrediting, federal, and other requirements.
- ◆ **Matthew Caron, MS**, has been promoted from Research Manager to Manager of Extramural Projects. Mr. Caron has been a valued member of the BCoA staff and has demonstrated the capacity to succeed in his new role.
- ◆ **Marion Somers, PhD**, Manager of Certificate Program in Professional Geriatric Care Management, retired from BCoA in May of 2006. **Andrea Nevins, MPH**, Director of Certificate Programs, retired in July. Pasquale (Pat) Gilberto, MSW, Senior Training Associate and Project Manager, recently announced that he will retire this December.

Upcoming Conferences

Date	Subject	Organization	Location	Author/ Organizer	Presenter
October 19	The Vanishing Safety Net: Long Term Care Implications for Baby Boomers	Brookdale Center on Aging	Hunter School of Social Work	Sadin Institute on Law, Public Policy, and Aging	Fahs, Rosenzweig, Chernick
October 25-27	The Effects of Age on Health Status and Health Care Patterns Among Chinese Immigrants in New York City	The State Society on Aging 34th Annual Conference	Saratoga Springs, NY	Fahs, Parikh, Morano	Fahs
October 25-27	Health Status and Health Services Utilization: A Comparison of Older vs. Younger Chinese Adults	The 5th International Conference on Urban Health	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Parikh, Fahs	Parikh
November 4-8	Overcoming Myths of Immigration and Urban Aging: A New Policy Model	American Public Health Association	Boston, MA	Viladrich, Fahs, Parikh	Fahs
November 16	Neighborhood-based Disparities in the Prevalence of Diabetes and Obesity in New York City	United Hospital Fund 17th Annual Symposium	New York, NY	Fahs, Caron, Das	Caron
November 16-20	Healthy Aging Among Older Asian Americans: Can We Meet the Challenge?	GSA 59th Annual Scientific Meeting	Dallas, TX	Fahs, Parikh, Morano	Fahs

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New Directions *(continued from cover page)*

these awards from Atlantic Philanthropies/AoA. New York is one of only 16 states to receive this prestigious leadership award. BCoA will be working with the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA), New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), and SUNY/Albany on this project, entitled "Empowering Older People to Take More Control of their Health through Evidence-Based Prevention Programs." The collaboration was catalyzed by BCoA and is the first time that New York State has been chosen as a leader in a national demonstration project in recent years.

Project in Development

BCoA will be partnering with the American Institute of Financial Gerontology to offer a **Certificate in Financial Gerontology**. It is anticipated that the program will be offered for the first time in the early part of 2007.

The Registered Financial Gerontologist (RFG) program is an educational and professional certification program that involves a six-course program of study followed by a comprehensive examination. Once the courses have been completed and the examination passed, the student will be considered to have qualified for the professional designation, Registered Financial Gerontologist, and the RFG certification.

The program is designed for financial

professionals who are interested in specializing in the practice of wealth span planning for older consumers and their families. A financial background is an important prerequisite for the program, since the curriculum focuses on gerontological issues in a financial context, as well as some advanced financial analytical tools.

For those with a gerontological background seeking greater knowledge of the products, financial advisory issues and the financial context relating to older consumers, BCoA will also be offering a separate modified version of the RFG program called the Foundations of Financial Gerontology.