



NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA ALLIANCE ON AGING

Published to Provide Information on Issues Affecting Older Oklahomans

Ken Jones, President

January-March 2022

Volume 34, No. 1

President's Message

Count the Cost

Before the State House or Senate votes on any bill, someone will have answered the question, "How much will this cost Oklahoma?". It is a short-sighted question. All we measure is the fiscal impact a bill will have on Oklahoma's budget and Oklahoma's agencies.

I propose we add a new standard. "How much will this bill cost Oklahomans?"

We represent seniors, so we always ask, "How will this impact seniors?". If only we could get the Legislature to ask that same question before each vote.

"Sure, that will save the OSDH on staff costs, but how will it impact residents of long-term care facilities?"

"We will not add any costs to Oklahoma if we change the absentee voting requirements, but how many seniors will be disenfranchised?"

I know many good legislators who do ask these questions. But obviously, we need more. So, we will continue our advocacy efforts to remind legislators how much their bills will cost seniors in Oklahoma. I just hope they are listening.

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Every May, ACL leads the nation's observance of Older Americans Month (OAM). In 2022, ACL will be focusing on aging in place – how older adults can plan to stay in their homes and live independently in their communities for as long as possible. The 2022 theme is *Age My Way*, an opportunity for us to explore the many ways older adults can remain in and be involved with their communities. Have you visited the [OAM website](https://acl.gov/oam/2022/oam-2022-materials) recently? The 2022 [posters](https://acl.gov/oam/2022/oam-2022-materials), [social media cover images](https://acl.gov/oam/2022/oam-2022-materials), [masthead artwork](https://acl.gov/oam/2022/oam-2022-materials), and [templates](https://acl.gov/oam/2022/oam-2022-materials) for a community proclamation and sample article are available now at <https://acl.gov/oam/2022/oam-2022-materials>. Stay tuned for social feed graphics, activity ideas, and more that you can use to celebrate OAM in your community. Don't forget to follow #OlderAmericansMonth for the latest from ACL and to see what others are planning!

2022 Second Letter to Legislators –by Esther Houser

March 18, 2022

Dear Legislator,

The Oklahoma Aging Partnership (OAP) is a non-partisan coalition comprised of the Oklahoma Alliance on Aging, the Oklahoma Silver-Haired Legislature, and the Oklahoma State Council on Aging and Adult Protective Services. Collectively, the OAP has identified key pieces of proposed legislation that will positively or negatively impact older Oklahomans. The collective decision to support or oppose legislation was made based on the current version of the bills as of March 18, 2022.

We will appreciate your support of the Aging Partnership's positions and welcome your questions.

OAP SUPPORTS:

House Bill 3040 (Rep. Brad Boles and Sen. Jessica Garvin) – Restores protection against multiple premium increases per year for Medicare Supplement Insurance policyholders. This bill supports the original intent by the Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature (OSHL) in 2019 and is strongly supported by the Oklahoma Aging Partnership. HB 3040 passed the House 92-0.

House Bill 3371 (Rep. Tammy West and Sen. Frank Simpson) – Provides a \$2,000 state income tax credit for a family caregiver whose federal adjusted gross income is less than \$50,000 (or less than \$100,000 for a couple). The family member being cared for must be 62 years of age or older and require assistance with at least two activities of daily living (certified by a licensed health care provider.) The tax credit is \$3,000 if the person receiving care is a Veteran or has a diagnosis of Dementia. The family caregiver must be related by blood or marriage to the person receiving care. Both AARP and the OAP support this bill.

House Bill 3415 (Rep. Daniel Pae and Sen. Brent Howard) – **With a Floor Amendment**, could exempt the Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature (OSHLAA) from the definition of “Public Body” in the Open Meeting Act. **We urge the Oklahoma Legislature to consider the need to reform the Open Meeting Act in such a way that it will permit Older Oklahomans and Oklahoma citizens with mobility problems to more easily participate in organizations which fall under the Act.** The ability to virtually attend important meetings of organization such as the State Council on Aging and Adult Protective Services, the Oklahoma Silver-Haired Legislature, and the Silver-Haired Legislature Alumni Association cannot be overemphasized.

House Bill 3701 (Rep. Todd Russ and Sen. Brent Howard) – Provides a state sales tax exemption (4.5%) for Hearing Aids purchased from an Audiologist or Hearing Aid Dealer who is licensed by the State of Oklahoma. **This is a Silver-Haired Legislature priority request bill.** Untreated Hearing Loss is a significant risk factor for the development of Dementia. The State spends millions of dollars each year for the care of Oklahomans with Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias. Delaying or avoiding that long-term care expense to the State should be weighed against the potential loss of sales tax revenue. The bill passed the House 90-0.

Senate Bill 1163 (Sen. Jessica Garvin and Rep. Nicole Miller) – Authorizes each District Attorney to develop a multidisciplinary team for the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed against elderly adults in coordination with the District Attorneys Council. The team

will focus on reports involving sexual abuse, abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an elderly person or vulnerable adult. The bill specifies the makeup of the membership and the responsibilities of the multidisciplinary teams. This bill passed the Senate 42-3.

Senate Bill 1495 (Senate President Pro Tem Greg Treat and House Speaker Charles McCall)

– The bill provides a state sales tax exemption on food items. The qualifying food items are identified in the bill. The bill does not affect municipal or county sales tax on food, which is levied by municipal and county governments. **This has been a Silver-Haired Legislature priority request bill.**

Senate Bill 1617 (Sen. Tom Dugger and Rep. Kevin West) – Extends the sunset date of the Oklahoma State Board of Examiners for Long-Term Care Administrators to July 1, 2025. The bill passed the Senate 36-7.

OAP OPPOSES:

Senate Bill 1518 (Senator Jessica Garvin and Rep. Marcus McEntire) – **The OAP strongly opposes this bill.** The bill would allow uncertified nurse aides to work for 8 months without completing their training or proving their competency! The current required nurse aide training can be completed in 2 weeks! Why should the frail Elders who rely on nurse aides for 90% of their care be treated with such disregard for their safety? **The Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature (OSHL) was instrumental in establishing the current Statutory requirement that Nurse Aides must be fully trained and Certified BEFORE being employed in a nursing home. The current law greatly improved care for nursing home Residents and reduced the number of nurse aides who quit before completing their training. Facilities can already get a temporary emergency waiver of this provision, if approved. Why make that permanent?**

Senate Bill 1661 (Sen. Paul Rosino and Rep. Marcus McEntire) – This bill describes an Inter-Governmental Transfer when “ownership” of a Long-Term Care Facility is transferred to operate under a hospital in order for the Long-Term Care Facility Provider to receive an enhanced Medicaid Reimbursement rate. **The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services previously denied Oklahoma’s application to institute this procedure, saying that the change of ownership was “illusory.”** Without clear requirements for increased staffing and other specific, direct care uses for the higher reimbursement, there is **NO BENEFIT to the RESIDENTS** of such a facility or to the State.

Senate Bill 1668 (Sen. Howard and Rep. Marcus McEntire) – This bill allows an individual with ONLY a high school diploma to use 10 years of experience as a certified assistant administrator of a nursing facility as a substitute for a 4-year degree. **Without effective leadership, Oklahoma’s nursing facilities will never improve.** A 4-year degree, plus special training and testing has been required for licensure as a Nursing Home Administrator since 2002 and has NOT been a deterrent to persons entering this profession. **There is NO CAUSE to lower this standard.**

Aging Resources and Tools

Aging in Place: Growing Older at Home

- Do you want to grow old in your own home? Check out these tips from NIA to help you #ageinplace: <https://go.usa.gov/xEEf>
- Living at home as you age requires careful planning. Get ideas on how to make your home safer & more accessible: <https://go.usa.gov/xEE7>
- Check out these 6 tips from the National Institute on Aging to make your home safer as you get older: <https://go.usa.gov/xEEH>

A few changes could make your home easier and safer to live in and help you continue to live independently.

- Don't use area rugs and check that all carpets are fixed firmly to the floor.
- Replace handles on doors or faucets with ones that are comfortable for you to use.
- Install grab bars near toilets and in the tub or shower.
- Reduce fall hazards: place no-slip strips or non-skid mats on tile and wood floors or surfaces that may get wet.
- Place light switches at the top and bottom of stairs and remember to turn on night lights.
- Install a ramp with handrails to the front door.

Protecting Seniors from Scams and Fraud

Older adults lose billions each year to scams and fraud. Get tips to protect yourself and your money. Learn how to spot common scams, keep your money secure, and report financial fraud if you suspect you're a victim. The National Council on Aging's website has numerous resources to help. Visit their website located at:


ncoa.org/older-adults/money/management/avoiding-scams.

AGING IN PLACE

TIPS ON MAKING HOME SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE

Many older adults want to “age in place” —stay in their own homes as they get older—but may have concerns about safety, getting around, or other daily activities.

A few changes could make your home easier and safer to live in and help you continue to live independently.



Don't use area rugs and check that all carpets are fixed firmly to the floor.

Replace handles on doors or faucets with ones that are comfortable for you to use.

Install grab bars near toilets and in the tub or shower.

Reduce fall hazards: place no-slip strips or non-skid mats on tile and wood floors or surfaces that may get wet.

Place light switches at the top and bottom of stairs and remember to turn on night lights.

Install a ramp with handrails to the front door.

For more information about aging in place, visit www.nia.nih.gov/aging-in-place.

NIH National Institute on Aging

Join the Alliance

Together we make a difference! The Oklahoma Alliance on Aging, a 501(c) (3), is a statewide non-partisan coalition. The Mission of the Alliance is to identify the needs of aging Oklahomans, educate on issues, and advocate for solutions.

As a member, YOU stay informed on issues about aging Oklahomans. YOU receive a quarterly newsletter, participate in an annual survey on issues, and have an opportunity to attend Education and Strategy committee meetings. In addition, the Alliance gives YOU a voice in identifying and prioritizing concerns and problems while monitoring legislation.

Membership Application: (check one or more)

(Contributions above basic dues are **tax-deductible** to the extent allowed by law.)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> New | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |
| Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (Over \$25) |
| Organizational | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (Over \$100) |
| Sponsors | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 or more | |
| Donation | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ (any amount is appreciated!) | |
| Endowment Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ (any amount is appreciated!) | |

Please designate a representative to attend meetings and receive mailings.

Names: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please let us know if you would like to:

☐ **Volunteer**

(Area of interest) _____

☐ **Work on a committee**

(Area of interest) _____

Sponsorship Application: (check one)

- ☐ **\$200 Newsletter** ☐ **\$50 full-page** ☐ **\$30 half page**

Help the Alliance by sponsoring the newsletter yourself or finding an organization or business. By becoming a sponsor, you:

- Ensure distribution of the newsletter across the state
- Are recognized in the newsletter edition you sponsor (your name or your organization's name, whichever you prefer)

Contact the Alliance office for details! Call 405-943-1895.

MAIL TO: P.O. Box 12008, OKC, OK 73157



Oklahoma Alliance on Aging
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www.okallianceonaging.org

Email: Marietta.OAOA@gmail.com

Call: (405) 943-1895

Hours: M, W, and F from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Marietta Real, Executive Director (PT)

Officers

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GiveSmartOKC

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GiveSmartOKC.org

A project of the



OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

2022 CALENDAR

Mark the Dates

Meetings, 3rd Tuesday of the Quarterly month.

June 21, 2022

September 20, 2022

December 20, 2022

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
(If a speaker is scheduled, the program time is 1:00 p.m.)

Location: To be Determined (contact
Marietta.oaoa@gmail.com)

If you are not a member, please join.