



## NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA ALLIANCE ON AGING

Published to Provide Information on Issues Affecting Older Oklahomans

Ken Jones, President

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### President's Message: Caregiving

For the third time in my life, I am a family caregiver for an adult. Twice I cared for someone with cancer and once for someone with multiple sclerosis and diabetes. There have been many long nights and early mornings. There have been crushing defeats and small victories. There were times I did not think I could cut it anymore. There were times I felt unfit for the task. There were many personal costs and even resentments, but at no time was there regret. And the most significant success was keeping loved ones out of institutional care for as long as possible.

The one thing that each of my caregiver roles required was financial sacrifice conservatively estimated in the tens of thousands of dollars per year. The savings to taxpayers provided by caregivers can be measured in the billions of dollars each year across America. Nearly all programs in the aging services spectrum rely on the family caregiver, from Older Americans Act services, like senior nutrition, to ADvantage Waiver Services, all rely heavily on the family caregiver.

Last year the Caregiver Tax Credit bill, House Bill 3371, was overwhelmingly approved by the Oklahoma House of Representatives with only two no votes. The bill would have provided a \$2,000 tax credit for most family caregivers. The bill ensured a limit on overall tax credits to \$1.5 million statewide. It offered additional credits for dementia and veterans' care. It provided for cost limits for the State of Oklahoma. It was sensible that there would be no tax credit that reduced taxes to less than zero. It was a small token of acknowledgment for the invaluable role of Oklahoma Caregivers.

But it never got a hearing in the Senate.

I understand hearing the word "no" from representatives because the people have the final say in representative democracy. As we gear up for the next legislative session, let us hope that the Oklahoma Senate can, at the very least, hear us out.

### Senior Day at the Capitol-February 27, 2023

Senior Day at the Capitol is returning to a person-to-person event in 2023! Please plan to join us the morning of Monday, February 27, 2023, at the State Capitol. Stay tuned for details in the coming months.

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## Family Caregiver Resources

Have you suddenly found yourself a caregiver for parents, siblings, mates, family members, or friends? Below are a few resources.

Family Caregiver Resources for Oklahoma (AARP)

<https://states.aarp.org/oklahoma/caregiver-resources>

Caregiver Support Groups-Tulsa, OK (Life Senior Services)

[http://www.lifeseniorservices.org/seniorline/Caregiver\\_Support\\_Groups.asp](http://www.lifeseniorservices.org/seniorline/Caregiver_Support_Groups.asp)

Health Care and Aging-Know the Law (Legal Aid)

<https://oklaw.org/issues/seniors/health-care-and-aging-1>

## Silver-Haired Legislature's 5 Priority Bills for 2023 by Esther Houser

The Oklahoma Silver-Haired Legislature's 2022 Biennial Legislative Session was held in Oklahoma City on September 20, 2022. Silver-Haired Senators and Representatives from all over Oklahoma, representing Older Oklahomans living in each of the 11 Area Agency on Aging Districts, met to receive training on the Legislative process and to discuss proposed legislation drafted by Silver-Haired Legislators themselves. Six bills and two resolutions were discussed during the OSHL Session.

The Session concluded with a Joint Session, during which the OSHL Senate and the OSHL House of Representatives met to discuss and select the 5 Priority Bills, which will be the focus of OSHL advocacy efforts during the 2023 Oklahoma Legislative Session. The five priority bills were as follows:

*Priority 1 – Legislation requiring that Nursing Homes Direct Care Staff must be certified or licensed to be counted in the facility's Direct Care Staff-to-Resident Ratio.*

*Priority 2– A bill exempting associations or councils with 50% or more of their membership comprised of persons aged 60 or older from the provisions of the Open Meeting Act.*

*Priority 3 – A bill requiring the Attorney General to establish, maintain, and make accessible to the public a Vulnerable Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Registry, including names of individuals who have been found guilty of such abuses and a description of the findings against them.*

*Priorities 4 and 5 - Two bills tied for these priority positions:*

*1) A bill exempting from State Sales Tax Hearing Aids prescribed by an audiologist and Insulin Test Strips and other Glucose Monitoring Devices; and,*

*2) A bill creating an Oklahoma Income Tax Credit for Family Caregivers of Oklahomans aged 62 or older.*

# Tips for Aging Well from the National Council on Aging

Wellness refers to pursuing a healthy, balanced lifestyle focused on the mind and the body. Pursuing wellness also means following healthy aging strategies and implementing lifestyle changes that can prevent diseases before they occur. According to the CDC, about half of all American adults have one or more chronic conditions (such as heart disease, stroke, and obesity).

By focusing on preventing diseases before they occur, people of all ages can live healthier and happier lives. So what are some tried and true strategies for achieving wellness in your life? Check out NCOA's seven tips below.

**1. Eat right.** For most adults, this means at least 400 grams (5 portions) of fruits and vegetables a day and five to eight 8-oz. glasses of water. It is also essential to keep your sugar intake low and to avoid highly processed foods that contain lots of sugar, fat, and salt. Try using spices and fresh herbs to flavor your favorite dishes (rather than extra butter or fried coatings). Consider swapping less healthy ingredients for their vegetarian version, such as zucchini noodles, instead of regular pasta. Try subbing homemade flavored water for soda to increase your water intake (and decrease sugar). Add whatever natural ingredients you like to your next glass of water, such as lemon juice, cucumbers, fresh mint/basil, or strawberries.

**2. Stay active**—in a way that's fun for you. You're more likely to stick with an athletic activity that you enjoy, so consider walking with a friend, trying a group dance class, going for a hike, or anything else that appeals to you. You can start with just 10 minutes a day and eventually try building towards 30 minutes or more of daily exercise. Every little bit helps.

**3. Try meditation.** Studies show that reflection may prevent mental deterioration, keeping your brain healthy as you age. Meditation is also proven to reduce stress and anxiety, leading to better overall health and quality of life.

**4. Learn a new skill.** Try learning a new skill that requires concentration, creative thinking, and memorization, like chess, crossword puzzles, or writing poetry. It's never too late to master that skill you always wanted to have—piano playing perhaps, or speaking French? Daily mental exercise helps you stay sharp and prevents cognitive decline.

**5. Volunteer.** Volunteering has been proven to boost happiness and is a great way to bond with friends and meet new people in your community (another proven factor in achieving wellness). Find a few hours a month and pick an activity that appeals to you and will keep you coming back.

**6. Learn more about falls prevention.** Every 15 seconds, an adult 50+ is treated in the emergency room for a fall. Falls are also a leading cause of fractures and traumatic brain injuries. Prevent falls and injuries by removing loose carpets or rugs around your house. Keep paths clear of electrical cords and clutter, and use nightlights in hallways and bathrooms. You can learn more [here](#).

**7. Don't forget the sunscreen!** Many people don't realize that your skin gets thinner and more susceptible to sunburn (and therefore skin cancer) as you age. Each year more than 3.5 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the US, over 90 percent of which are caused by the sun's ultraviolet rays (UVR). Wear a high SPF sunscreen that protects against UVR rays, and always reapply every few hours.

The National Council on Aging developed a guide to help you age with confidence. The Age Well Planner provides personalized resources, tools, and expert help. Start your assessment today by visiting <https://ncoa.org/age-well-planner>.



## **Nursing Homes High Staff Turnover's Effect on Residents**

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care Report: High Staff Turnover: A Job Quality Crisis in Nursing Homes examines how nursing homes with higher staff turnover perform poorly in a variety of measures, how staff turnover harms residents, the causes of high turnover, and offers solutions to this endemic problem, such as:

- Increasing staff wages and benefits;
- Reducing staff workloads;
- Providing on-going training; and
- Increasing career advancement opportunities

Read the report here> [https://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/issues/High\\_Staff\\_Turnover-A\\_Job\\_Quality\\_Crisis\\_in\\_Nursing\\_Homes.pdf](https://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/issues/High_Staff_Turnover-A_Job_Quality_Crisis_in_Nursing_Homes.pdf)

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

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 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](http://www.okallianceonaging.org)

Email: [Marietta.OAOA@gmail.com](mailto: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

Ken Jones, President (2020-2022)  
Esther Houser, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (2020-2022)  
Janet Moore, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President (2020-2022)  
Annette Mays, Secretary, Treasurer (2020-2022)

#### Board of Directors

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Trish Emig, Strategy Committee  
Anne Davis, Individual  
Mickey Peercy, SODA/AAA

Volunteer: Wanda DeBruler, Newsletter

Special *THANKS* to all our Volunteers and Supporters!

Find. Learn. Give.

View our complete profile at  
**GiveSmartOKC**  
Know More. Give More.  
[GiveSmartOKC.org](http://GiveSmartOKC.org)

A project of the  
 OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## 2022 CALENDAR *Mark the Dates*

Meetings, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the Quarterly month.

**December 20, 2022 (ZOOM)**

**Time:** 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

#### **Location:**

ZOOM link will be sent prior to the meeting. If you don't receive one, contact OAOA below.

Contact [Marietta.oaoa@gmail.com](mailto:Marietta.oaoa@gmail.com) for any questions.

If you are not a member, please join.