

Missouri Show-Me Summit on Aging and Health

Hilton Branson Convention Center

October 18, 2010

Good morning and thank you for your kind introduction. I am so pleased to be here today with friends from all over Missouri.

I know you will be hearing a lot about the way health care – especially health care for the elderly – will be changing. You've probably heard about new models of care, new economic models and the new methods and approaches that organizations need to take.

The one thing we know for certain is that many of these changes have been coming for a long time, driven by demographic changes and changing perceptions of what retirement ought to be. But health reform, of course, has increased the pace of these changes and added new twists of its own.

With the first of the baby boom generation now on the cusp of turning 65, issues of retirement and the challenges of aging are receiving more attention every day.

Just as the boomers have done at every stage of life, they are changing the way society views retirement. Boomer retirees will bring with them new attitudes about their needs. They will have different perceptions of their own strengths and capacities. They will expect to travel and have more active retirements than earlier generations.

This group will be more tech savvy and will want more say in how they live. They expect easy access to computers and the internet. They and their caregivers want value in their choices and will reach out more for coaching to navigate the complex systems. And they will expect to do what they want, when they want.

It reminds me of the couple of 85-year-olds who met, fell in love and decided to get married.

(Joke about the old couple going to the drugstore)

These demographic changes and new attitudes are not unique to the United States. The number of persons aged 60 and over has been increasing at an unprecedented rate. In 1980, there were 378 million people in the world aged 60 or above. Just 30 years later, that figure has doubled to 759 million, and it is projected to rise to 2 billion by 2050.

In many ways, the issues that you are beginning to grapple with now are the issues of the future. Only the faces will change.

The theme for this year's meeting, "Local Service, Lifetime Issues," underscores the importance of working with individuals and paying attention to local needs. While the Affordable Care Act deals broadly with the issues of the aging patient we all know that all healthcare is local. Those of you who work with the Area Agencies on Aging are the "local" touch of the new opportunities offered in the Affordable Care Act.

You do your share of volunteer work each day. You do the fundraising that stretches federal and state dollars to meet so many needs. And very soon you will be providing the task

of helping seniors navigate the open enrollment period for Medicare Part D prescription drug plans.

This is a huge effort. And no one appreciates it more than the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius. I do bring a heartfelt “Hello” from her. And I extend to all of you her deepest thanks for your service. As a former governor, she knows that you help literally thousands of Medicare beneficiaries in countless ways every day.

The recent safe return of 33 Chilean Miners has reminded us what a focused, concerted, and coordinated effort can do to reach a goal. They are safe and reunited with their families because people who care came together to put aside differences, pool resources, set a goal, and execute flawlessly. While it not likely the next big news story, wouldn't it be great to look back on the five years and say we did the same thing to meet the needs of millions of American seniors allowing them the full range of choices and resources to live the healthiest, longest and most productive lives available? Wouldn't it be great to say we put aside our differences, pooled resources, set goals, and executed flawlessly to ensure the safety and respect of our seniors.

I am here today to talk with you about some of the things that the Affordable Care Act does. And some of the things that it doesn't do. I'm also here to listen to you and to hear your concerns. I plan to show you a few highlights of the healthcare.gov website. And I want to address some of your questions.

The Affordable Care Act has been called the biggest change in health care since the 1965 enactment of Medicare and Medicaid and the Older Americans Act.

ACA is an opportunity to expand on those programs and further improve the health and lives of older Americans.

And it challenges all of us to have a positive effect on the lives of older Americans by taking advantage of opportunities to promote the protections that this law offers for the most vulnerable adults in our communities.

For your clients, the Affordable Care Act represents a dramatic leap forward in potential benefits for Seniors. As Assistant Secretary Kathy Greenlee has said, "The three

legged stool now has 4 legs: the Older Americans Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and now ACA.”

Let me show you a few of these new opportunities:

(SLIDE PRESENTATION)

I know this is a lot of information to absorb. But your clients will be glad you did because most of them probably do not know about all the improvements included in this law. To help you with that task, the healthcare.gov portal is up and running and very likely will become your new best friend!

I would like to show you some of the highlights of this ever-expanding resource that is available for all Americans.

All Questions fall into two buckets...

(DEMO HEALTHCARE.GOV WEBSITE)

I encourage you to become more familiar with the website. Because you have much work to do this fall.

On top of all the changes wrought by health reform, I know that you are working on several initiatives at the state level:

- The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging has begun a Falls Prevention program called “Steady As You Go”, which is now being tried in every senior center in Missouri.
- The AAAs also are working to expand the availability of Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs throughout the state.
- And probably one of the most crucial activities that you do is assisting the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in reaching out to low-income beneficiaries. You do a great job informing them of the Low-Income Subsidy under Medicare Part D and the Medicare Savings Plans that they might be eligible for.
- These are the hard-to-reach beneficiaries who need you the most. This population depends on and trusts you because you make face-to-face contact with them and assist them in obtaining the benefits they often

desperately need. I think you deserve to give yourself a round of applause for your work!!