Perspectives that Shaped the Present:
Celebrating 40 Years of OAA Nutrition Programs

August 23, 2012

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Older Americans Act of 1965
P.L. 89-73, July 14, 1965

Lyndon Johnson signing the OAA, 1965
OAA, Influenced by Political and Policy Trends in Aging

- **1965**: Legacy of the Great Society: Nutrition program began as a demonstration project in the late 1960s
- **1970s**: New Federalism: State and area agency on aging infrastructure development
- **1980s-present**: Development of aging services infrastructure and home and community-based services system

OAA Major Amendments

- **1965 Act** was one of the foundation pieces for evolving public policy on aging
  - Creation of strategies, programs, and services to meet needs of older people
  - Provision of tangible and intangible help to innumerable older people
  - Continuous and dynamic identification of needs of older people
  - Development of nationwide aging infrastructure
  - Recruitment of thousands of career professionals to field of aging

**Timeline of Major Amendments**

1972: Nutrition program authorized

1978: Home-delivered meals authorized and ombudsman services required

1973: AAAs created; multipurpose senior centers and community service employment authorized

1992: Elder rights recognized

2000: National family caregiver support program authorized

2006: HCBS systems through ADRCs, evidence-based health promotion services

2012

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**OAA Nutrition Program Purpose**

Purpose:

“1. to reduce hunger and food insecurity;
2. to promote socialization of older individuals; and
3. to promote health and well-being of older individuals by assisting [them] to gain access to nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services to delay the onset of adverse health conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.”

42 USC 3030
OAA Nutrition Program Purpose

1972 Legislation:

“Many elderly persons do not eat adequately because (1) they cannot afford to do so; (2) they lack the skills to select and prepare nourishing and well-balanced meals; (3) they have limited mobility which may impair their capacity to shop and cook for themselves; and (4) they have feelings of rejection and loneliness which obliterate the incentive necessary to prepare and eat a meal alone...there is an acute need for national policy which provides older Americans, particularly those with low-incomes, with low cost, nutritionally sounds meals...Besides promoting better health...through improved nutrition, such a program would reduce the isolation of old age, offering older Americans an opportunity to live their remaining years in dignity.”

P.L. 92-258, Nutrition Program for the Elderly Act, enacted March 22, 1972

Aging Services Network
Older Americans Act, FY 2012 Funding

Total: $1.9 billion

- **TITLE VII:** Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection Activities ($1.1 billion)
- **TITLE III:** Grants for State and Community Programs on Aging ($1.185 billion)
- **Nutrition Services:** 42.3%
- **Disease Prevention and Health Promotion:** 1.1%
- **Family Caregiver Support:** 1.3%
- **Supportive Services:** 3.2%
- **TITLE VI:** Grants for Native Americans ($34.0 million)
- **TITLE V:** Community Service Senior Opportunities Act* ($49.3 million)
- **TITLE IV:** Activities for Health, Independence, and Longevity† ($27.6 million)
- **TITLE II:** Administration on Aging* ($27.3 million)

Source: Prepared by the National Health Policy Forum, based on e-mail communications with AoA staff, and phone conversations with DOL staff, February 2012. For complete references, see www.nhpf.org.

Older Americans Act: Federal Expenditures for Services Authorized by Title III and Title VII, FY 2010

Total: $1.041 billion

- **Other Expenditures:** Other - 9%
- **Other Benefits:** Legal Assistance - 3%
  - Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Elder Abuse Prevention - 4%
- **Nutrition:** Congregate Meals* - 27%
  - Home Delivered Meals - 2%

* Funds for nutrition counseling and education included in congregate meal expenditures.
OAA: Broad Mission, Limited Resources

- Many advocates say OAA resources have not kept pace with increasing older population
- Effect of state budgetary woes on aging programs
- Aging network successful in leveraging non-OAA funds and in developing varied services programs
- Attention to scarce resources will continue to have relevance over coming years
- What challenges does the aging of the baby boom pose for the aging infrastructure and nutrition services providers?
- How should the OAA nutrition program be conceptualized for new realities of the 21st century?

For More Information

National Health Policy Forum Resources