

Post Event Summary Report Format for Officially Designated WHCOA Events

Name of Event: At the Crossroads: Aging Policy in Maine

Date of Event: February 2 & 3, 2005

Location of Event: Sheraton Hotel, South Portland, Maine

Number of Persons Attending: 170

Sponsoring Organization: Maine Gerontological Society

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Priority Issue: **Work Place of the Future**

Barriers:

- Age discrimination in the workplace
- Limited understanding of older worker issues by employers
- Maintaining a skilled older workforce
- Limited work schedule options for older workers

Proposed Solution(s):

1. Area: Education and Training
 - a. Improve and promote educational opportunities for older persons including affordability, tax incentives, and paid trainings
 - b. Develop evidence-based practices to increase skills especially around new technology such as computers and the internet
 - c. Develop/define educational models which decrease ageism for both the general public and business
2. Area: Money & Mandates
 - a. Provide incentives for employers to hire older workers
 - b. Provide support to not penalize business for hiring older workers (tax, incentives, subsidies, etc.)
 - c. Provide for elimination of employer payment for Medicare/SSI
 - d. Eliminate windfall provisions
3. Area: Flexibility & Availability
 - a. Encourage the application of best practices and the opportunity for adopting non-traditional work schedules and maximum flexibility.

Priority Issue: Our Community

Barriers: Redefine the aging image

In doing so consider:

- Stereotypes and labels
- Power of media
- Multiple generations
- Lack of understanding of aging
- Economic status altering image
- Myths of aging
- Us and them divided mentality

Proposed Solution(s):

1. Increase intergenerational opportunities
2. Educate public at large on aging – challenge myths and transcend labels
3. Create incentives for media to promote positive image of aging
4. Redefine retirement and transition through life

Priority Issue: Planning Along the Life Span

Barriers:

- Social attitudes
- Transportation
- Perceptions regarding aging
- Lack of time, hectic schedules and pace of life
- Weakening of community bonds

Caregiver Information & Support Barriers:

- Money
- Language – vocabulary
- Privacy laws
- Awareness of progress
- Isolation
- Identification of stress
- Guilt

Funding for Home-Based Care Barriers:

- Deteriorating existing infrastructure
- Limitations of categorical eligibility
- Lack of resources
- Need for support in home

Proposed Solution(s):

1. Caregiver Information & Support
 - Information
 - Money
 - Respite
 - Intergenerational options
 - Cooperative strategies – increase choice – options
2. Funding for “home based” care
 - Worker training
 - Worker pay
3. Every senior has a community connection
 - Re-vitalize the “community feel”
 - Assess: inform, connect
 - Neighborhood watch
 - Mental health
 - Fund good community programs
 - Meet local area needs
 - Transportation funding based on elder’s wants
 - Engage citizens in community problem solving

Priority Issue: Social Engagement**Barriers:**

- Intergenerational connections
- Isolation and access issues
- Transition to retirement and lifelong learning
- Redefining the aging image

Proposed Solution(s):

1. Recognize that restructuring social security solvency is a challenge, not a crisis.
2. Maximize options for change that need to be identified, carefully considered, and advance the best solutions
3. Encourage this Congress to pass the Elder Justice Act”
4. Begin financial education early in our schools, funded by private sector and tie financial knowledge to “national learning results”. Continue financial education through lifespan “adult education, workshops at senior centers, etc.