

Advocacy Committee Guiding Principles and Values

Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging

The Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging (CSA) is charged by the Older Michiganians Act, to “serve as an effective and visible advocate for aging and older person in all government decisions.” With this charge, the CSA formed an Advocacy Committee to provide clarity and structure to the advocacy efforts of the Commission and to complete due diligence on policy issues impacting older adults in Michigan. In addition to the Older Michiganians Act, the following values and principles serve as a guide for the advocacy work of the committee.

Values

Learning – The CSA Advocacy Committee prioritizes the deep understanding of the landscape, issues, and opportunities for older adults. It will use data, research, and anecdotes from the field to gain useful and working knowledge to support the advocacy work of the commission.

Action-oriented – In accordance with the CSA mission and the Older Michiganians Act, the CSA Advocacy Committee will foster both proactive and reactive measures in support of the advocacy work of the commission.

Guiding Principles

The public policy and advocacy work must directly or predominantly impact seniors.

The public policy and advocacy work must address issues that have broad impact and/or implications in all geographies across Michigan.

Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee is comprised of four Commissioners tasked with moving the charge from the Commission forward. Each committee member also serves as Lead Commissioner on one of the four CSA Legislative and Policy Agenda priorities as follows:

Commissioner Matthew Adeyanju

Lead: Direct Care Worker Shortage

Contact: MatthewAdeyanju@ferris.edu

Commissioner Joan Ilardo

Lead: Transportation

Contact: ilardo@msu.edu

Commissioner Nancy Duncan

Lead: Reduce Elder Abuse

Contact: RN029@aol.com

Commissioner Kathleen LaTosch

Advocacy Committee Chair

Lead: Eliminate the Wait List

Contact: klatosch@gmail.com

Legislative and Policy Agenda – Four Priorities

Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging

In a review of Area Agency on Aging plans as well as documentation of public hearings and in-person testimonies, the following four Legislative and Policy Agenda priorities were identified and approved by the Commission in 2018.

Transportation

Support transportation policies that mitigate barriers to meeting the needs and quality of life for older adults. Next to health concerns, transportation is a top issue for meeting the needs of older adults. As adults age, the need for transportation for basic needs such as food and clothing purchases become strained when mobility and/or access to transportation services are limited. Accessible and affordable transportation options are integral to a vibrant quality of life for older adults and those living with disabilities. Studies have shown, a vibrant quality of life, social connectivity and a stronger well-being directly correlate with a person's ability to be mobile.

Direct Care Worker Shortage

Support policies and programs designed to create a strong pool of well-qualified, trained and compensated direct care workers. The State Advisory Council on Aging's 2016 Annual Report to the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging regarding Direct Care Workers (DCWs), stated by 2022, Michigan will need about 24,000 more trained DCWs than we currently have, due to increasing numbers of older adults and people with disabilities. Older adults (age 85+) represent the fastest-growing segment of the population in Michigan. DCWs provide the majority of paid in-home long-term supports and services (LTSS) that make it possible for older adults to remain at home, including assistance with tasks of daily living. It is critically important for Michigan to be prepared to meet this demand.

Reduce Elder Abuse

Support policies and programs designed to minimize elder abuse and exploitation. It is an imperative to keep our elderly safe, unfortunately elder abuse or crimes against adults age 65 or older is growing in Michigan. Information and data suggest that over 1 million Americans over the age of 65 have been subjected to physical brutality, psychological abuse, sexual assault, or financial exploitation by an individual tasked with their care and support. It is estimated that more than 400,000 experience some form of elder abuse. Elder abuse statistics estimate that up to 10% of elderly individuals eventually become victims of some type of abuse or neglect, though this varies based upon the survey and the research. By working to better understand the problem of elder abuse and by putting policies in place to prevent these crimes, we will improve the quality of life for Michigan's older residents, now and in the future.

Eliminate the Wait List

Support policies and programs designed to eliminate the waiting list for home-delivered meals and in-home services. Aging in place is one of the most important quality of life elements for older adults. Home-delivered meals and In-home services make it possible for the aging to stay in their home as long as possible. To meet the demand for these services in Michigan, increased funding is needed to match the growing population of older adults needing services. The Commission for Services to the Aging will advocate in partnership with the Silver Key Coalition in meeting its goal to deliver on the promise to make Michigan a "no wait state" for senior meals and in-home services.