

September 27, 2006

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Kaine:

Enclosed please find Virginia Tech's response to HB 110 passed during the 2006 legislative session. As Virginia's senior land-grant university, Virginia Tech is committed to providing educational programs and services to advance the social and economic well-being of all the Commonwealth's citizens. The primary consumers of the university's programs do not normally fall within the age definitions identified in the language of HB 110. However, several program units both directly and indirectly address senior adult populations. These programs are detailed in the attached report and response to the action items identified in the legislation.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information on these programs.

Sincerely,



Charles W. Steger
President

/lf:sws

cc: Marilyn Tavenner, Secretary of Health and Human Resources
John Dooley, Vice Provost for Outreach and International Affairs

Virginia Tech
Report to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources
HB 110 Activities

Programs Providing Services to Senior Citizens:

- Virginia Tech Adult Day Services (VTADS) provides day respite care for vulnerable and frail older adults living in the community, usually with family members. VTADS also serves the community through the Virginia Tech missions of research, teaching and outreach.
- The Center for Gerontology facilitates multidisciplinary research that enhances the quality of life of older adults. In support of this mission, the Center focuses primarily on three streams of coordinated research: Family Gerontology, Health and Aging, and Elder Rights.
- Virginia Cooperative Extension disseminates research-based information for senior adults primarily through its Family and Consumer Sciences program area.
- Continuing and Professional Education program offerings occasionally target senior adult populations. Additionally, open enrollment continuing education programs will frequently include participants in the age ranges identified by the legislation. There is currently not a system in place to capture the ages of program participants.

Specific data available in response to the five items of the report follows:

1. To the extent such data is available, the number of persons who received services from the agency in the past fiscal year who fell into each of the following age ranges: 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If the agency can provide data that compares such numbers to numbers of senior citizens served in the past, please do so. If the agency lacks specific information about the numbers of senior citizens it serves, but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer senior citizens than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.

The Virginia Tech Adult Day Services provided care for the past fiscal year (FY 2005-06) to:

Seven seniors between the ages of 65-74 years old
Thirteen seniors between the ages of 75-84 years old
Fourteen seniors over 85

Current space and budget limit participation to a maximum census of eighteen seniors per day. The inquiry rate is ten times the admission rate.

2. Identify the agency services that are utilized by senior citizens 65 and older in significant numbers. Indicate whether the agency has the capacity at present to serve all interested seniors or whether the demand for certain services exceeds the agency's capacity. If so, does the agency maintain waiting lists for services?

VTADS operates close to capacity at this time and occasionally has a waiting list.

Senior adults participate in many noncredit programs provided by Continuing and Professional Education. The current demand is being met; thus waiting lists for programs are not needed.

3. Identify current agency programs, specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older, that fall into any of the following six categories: Health Care/Wellness; Education; Public Safety; Recreation; Financial Security (including Housing); and Transportation.

VTADS

Health Care/Wellness:

VTADS staff monitors weight, blood pressure, general condition of alertness and cognitive capacity, eating and voiding patterns. Some clients with specific diagnoses are checked by the nurse as directed by their physician. Wellness is encouraged by regular activities of gardening, education/cognitive, intergenerational, games and puzzles, physical exercise, a healthy lunch and 2 snacks.

Education:

VTADS works to educate families through regular interdisciplinary plan of care meetings, ongoing conversations, and caregiver support group meetings. The topics include resources in the community, websites and publication information, loan of books, and discussion of tips for dealing with physical and emotional stressors. A significant part of the VTADS program is to educate students and engage in research to better the care provided to frail older adults.

Public Safety:

Additionally, staff members at VTADS are mandated reporters of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults in its care.

Recreation:

VTADS activity director is a certified therapeutic recreation specialist and provides therapeutic recreation to participants in activities on a daily basis.

Education:

Virginia Cooperative Extension provides several programs focused on nutrition and wellness and family financial management for senior adults through its statewide network of local extension agents.

Virginia Tech was the lead partner in a new life-long learning initiative launched this past year at the Roanoke Higher Education Center. The initiative provided a variety of educational programs for senior adult participants.

4. Identify the extent to which your agency provides "consumer-oriented" publications and websites online that are designed to be "senior-friendly." If the information you

currently provide is not readily accessible to seniors, identify any steps your agency is taking to improve accessibility.

Most print publications are also online and are ADA compliant which meets or exceeds the standard of "senior-friendly," (large-size fonts, well-spaced information and graphics, easy to manipulate pages, etc.) With the exception of a few extension publications and promotional materials for VTADS, publications and/or websites specifically for this population do not exist.

5. Describe any other services or programs that the agency has implemented or plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

VTADS has served as a model and resource for the development of other rural adult day care centers. Through its academic programs, the university supports education of future gerontology professionals as well as educates the general undergraduate and graduate population of community-based services and their role in future health and housing needs.

Much of the Center for Gerontology's research relies on data collected from older Virginians. The Center works with state agencies (VDA, DMAS, APS) to gather research-based information to support plans for the development of state-funded programs and to evaluate existing programs serving older adults.

Expansion of the Lifelong Learning series of the Roanoke Higher Education Center is currently underway. If this model proves sustainable, this program could be transported to other Virginia Tech Commonwealth Campus Centers.