

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Progress in Establishing a
Mechanism to Facilitate
Improved Coordination and
Access to Services to Senior
Citizens in Virginia
(HJR 132, 2010)**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 10

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
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Preface

House Joint Resolution 132 of the 2010 General Assembly requests the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to establish a mechanism to facilitate improved coordination and access to services to senior citizens in Virginia. The Secretary is directed to report progress in fulfilling this request prior to the start of the 2011 General Assembly session.

This report was completed by staff at the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) and the Virginia Department for the Aging (VDA). VDA currently serves as the lead agency for critical coordinating initiatives including the No Wrong Door/ Aging and Disability Resource Connection service coordination program and the Four-Year Plan for Aging Services. VDA and DRS are also the joint lead agencies for the development of a third initiative with a significant focus on facilitating access to aging services, Virginia's Blueprint for Livable Communities.

Ongoing activities to carry out the above-noted coordination mechanisms in aging services together constitute a major component of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources' strategy to facilitate improved coordination and access to services for older Virginians. As such, the focus of this report will be to describe these initiatives.

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Executive Summary

Currently, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources oversees three initiatives which are crucial to improving coordination and access to aging services among older Virginians. The No Wrong Door/ Aging and Disability Resource Connection program and Virginia's Blueprint for Livable Communities both aim to coordinate information sharing and access to community services to Virginia's aging population. Additionally, Virginia's Four-Year Plan for Aging Services facilitates these and other state coordination efforts by providing a detailed snapshot of the status of the Commonwealth's services to its older residents and offers recommendations for ways to improve these services.

As stated in the language of HJ 132, through its administration of the No Wrong Door service coordination program, the Virginia Department for the Aging and the statewide network of Area Agencies on Aging provide comprehensive services and convey information to persons in need by telephone and Internet at community locations through electronic resources. The No Wrong Door program is a virtual information sharing and data collection and reporting system for aging service providers and consumers. As part of the Federal Administration on Aging's Aging and Disability Resource Connection program, No Wrong Door is in a strong position to meet vast and growing needs for access to and coordination of a full range of services and information through a virtual single point of entry system for older Virginians, their caregivers, and adults with disabilities.

More recently, the Virginia Department for the Aging and Department of Rehabilitative Services have taken the joint lead in developing Virginia's Blueprint for Livable Communities in response to 2010 legislation (HB 514/SB 410) passed by the General Assembly. The Blueprint will consist of a report to the Governor and the General Assembly by June 30, 2011 and will include planning through 2025 to improve long-term services and supports for older Virginians and people with disabilities to live in their communities. The completed report will describe existing statewide coordination activities in housing, transportation, disability, and aging services. The report will also highlight ongoing regional planning activities and barriers to livable communities planning; suggest existing resources to assist regional and local leaders with planning activities; and describe actions that the General Assembly can support in order to improve Virginia's communities' preparedness to meet demand increases on services for older Virginians. The successful adoption and expansion of livable communities planning activities at the local, regional, and state levels will result in improved awareness and access to aging services for the aging population as well as more efficient and effective delivery of those service systems within community networks of public and private service providers.

A third initiative, Virginia's Four-Year Plan for Aging Services, is a legislatively mandated report to be issued by a workgroup overseen by the Virginia Department for the Aging every four years, with a biennial update to the Governor every two years. The first edition of the Four-Year Plan was submitted in December 2009 and contains a comprehensive overview of the status of aging services in Virginia. The report also contains a list of 46 recommendations which, if carried out, would improve the efficacy of state-funded services in meeting the needs of Virginia's growing population of older adults. The Four-Year Plan workgroup continues to meet quarterly and facilitate progress toward implementing and continuously reevaluating its recommendations. The workgroup's successes will result in improved coordination and access to aging services across the Commonwealth.

Each of these three initiatives contains a significant focus on interagency coordination to identify and plan for the growing needs of the aging population and to improve the efficiency and array of state-funded service options available to older Virginians and their caregivers. By necessity, all three of these initiatives are heavily intertwined with, and informed by, state coordination efforts under other Secretariats; most notably the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and the Secretary of Transportation. It is beyond the scope of this report to describe in detail these many additional related mechanisms, but examples of agency collaborations within this complex network of initiatives aimed at improving access to Virginia's aging services can be attained by reading the reports generated from the three HHR initiatives described in this report.

No Wrong Door/ Aging and Disability Resource Connection Initiative

The Virginia Department for the Aging applied for and received two grants from the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) to develop a statewide electronic Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), with the goal of providing a virtual single point of entry for consumers of long-term supports and services in the Commonwealth. The AoA website offers this overview of the ADRC program:

ADRC, a collaborative effort of AoA and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), is designed to streamline access to long-term care. The ADRC program provides states with an opportunity to effectively integrate the full range of long-term supports and services into a single, coordinated system. By simplifying access to long-term care systems, ADRCs and other single point of entry (SEP) systems are serving as the cornerstone for long-term care reform in many states.

...Nationally, ADRC programs have taken important steps towards meeting AoA and CMS's vision by

- creating a person-centered, community-based environment that promotes independence and dignity for individuals;
- providing easy access to information to assist consumers in exploring a full range of long-term support options; and
- providing resources and services that support the range of needs for family caregivers.

ADRCs target services to the elderly and individuals with physical disabilities, serious mental illness, and/or developmental/intellectual disabilities. The ultimate goal of the ADRCs is to serve all individuals with long-term care needs regardless of their age or disability.

ADRC programs provide information and assistance to individuals needing either public or private resources, to professionals seeking assistance on behalf of their clients and to individuals planning for their future long-term care needs. ADRC programs also serve as the entry point to publicly administered long-term supports including those funded under Medicaid, the Older Americans Act and state revenue programs.¹

Though some states have designated physical locations and offices to serve as their communities' ADRCs, Virginia's ADRC is a web-based technology network that links agencies, consumers, and providers virtually. Called the No Wrong Door program, this service allows consumers to share information with a network of providers and administrators rather than requiring consumers to retell their story to countless different service providers and health professionals. The 2009 Four-Year Plan for Aging Services states, "The NWD initiative promotes local coordination and planning

¹ Administration on Aging, "Aging and Disability Resource Centers," Administration on Aging, http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/ADRC/index.aspx (Accessed December 9, 2010).

through Community Advisory Councils, harnesses technology to increase the efficiency of providers and stretch resources, and empowers consumers with information and choice through *Virginia Easy Access*.²

Virginia's Area Agencies on Aging, whose core services include information and access services to older adults and their families, have been the first agencies targeted to incorporate the No Wrong Door program. Each of Virginia's 25 Area Agencies on Aging serve as the lead agency on a local Community Advisory Council responsible for addressing local coordination and planning needs with the help of No Wrong Door. Increasingly, Centers for Independent Living, whose core services include information and referral services for people with disabilities, are collaborating with AAA's to serve on the Community Advisory Councils and facilitate the expansion of No Wrong Door in order to create a statewide information exchange network.

Virginia's implementation and continued expansion of the No Wrong Door program is a major step toward improving the ability of older Virginians and caregivers to navigate an often complex assortment of state-funded services and funding sources. It represents a significant opportunity for the Commonwealth to improve the quality and timeliness of service delivery to older Virginians.

² Virginia Department for the Aging, *Virginia's Four-Year Plan for Aging Services*, (Virginia: Commonwealth of Virginia, 2009. (Report Document No. 461)), 44.

Blueprint for Livable Communities

In 2010 the General Assembly passed legislation (H.B. 514/S.B. 410) directing the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to develop a blueprint for livable communities and long-term services and supports for older Virginians and people with disabilities. The Virginia Department for the Aging and the Department of Rehabilitative Services serve as joint lead agencies in the development of this Blueprint, which is to be reported to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than June 30, 2011.

The Commonwealth's approach to encouraging and rewarding regional livable communities planning takes two major focuses:

- (1) Altering community design features to make living environments more accessible so residents are better positioned to navigate the community with fewer supports; and
- (2) Improving service delivery to better meet growing demand- most notably for housing and transportation services and supports.

Virginia's Blueprint for Livable Communities will aim to support and assist localities and regions in carrying out these planning processes, as communities will differ widely in their needs and resources for creating a more livable environment for their residents.

The Secretary's report on this effort will contain a general overview of ongoing state initiatives which support interagency coordination and improved efficiency in the use of state funds for human services for older Virginians and people with disabilities. Several best practices in regional and local efforts to improve community design features and transportation, housing, and aging services in Virginia's communities are also highlighted in the report.

The Blueprint report will also make several recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor for steps that can be taken to facilitate planning for more livable communities in the Commonwealth. These recommendations include proposals for cross-Secretariat coordination efforts in the fields of transportation, health services, and housing; means for conducting outreach to local leaders in order to educate, promote, reward, and share best practices in livable communities planning; and strategies for facilitating regional partnership development.

Actions taken by the Secretariat of Health and Human Resources and HHR agencies toward improving community livability to older Virginians and people with disabilities include:

- Creation of a "Blueprint for Livable Communities Resource Catalogue" to summarize basic background research on the national and state livable communities initiative.
- Establishment the Blueprint for Livable Communities Citizen Advisory Group, comprised of 25 citizens with a variety of expertise in aging, disability, transportation, housing, and community development services. The group is charged with informing the development of the Blueprint and advising the Secretary on proposed recommendations and incentives for local and regional participation in livable communities planning.
- Statewide outreach to stakeholders to educate local advocates and service providers about the merits of livable communities planning. Outreach activities include issuance of periodic

electronic updates, participation in statewide conferences in related fields, and presentations to various audiences of stakeholders.

Livable communities expand the opportunities for older Virginians, people with disabilities, and other special populations to participate in community life with the greatest possible independence, thus the Blueprint is an important mechanism for facilitating access to services among senior citizens in Virginia.

Four-Year Plan for Aging Services

The *Code of Virginia* § 2.2-703.1 directs the Virginia Department for the Aging to develop a Four-Year Plan for Aging Services. VDA is charged with including in its Plan descriptions of the aging population and its impact on the Commonwealth, recommendations for funding increases to programs serving the aging population, and other information on the demographics and service needs of older Virginians.

The first edition of the Four-Year Plan was reported in December 2009, describing in detail the current and future challenges facing the Commonwealth and its communities due to the rapid aging of Virginia's population. The report devotes significant attention to explaining Virginia's network of state-supported programs and services that assist the aging population. Major focus areas within the first report of the Four-Year Plan include an overview of health services and access to long-term care, home- and community-based services and supports, employment, volunteerism, housing, transportation and safety and security. The report also describes the acute needs of special populations of older Virginians including adults with lifelong disabilities, older adults raising children, immigrants, and prisoners.

The 2009 Four-Year Plan contains 46 recommendations which draw attention to opportunities for the Commonwealth to improve its services to the aging population and expand its array of services and programs where unmet needs exist. The Four-Year Plan Workgroup, which is charged by *Code of Virginia* with authorship of the report, continues to meet quarterly and take actions pursuant to the objectives captured in its initial list of 46 recommendations. A biennial update of the Four-Year Plan for Aging Services will highlight the state's progress in improving services to older Virginians and provide updates on important new state initiatives including No Wrong Door and the Blueprint for Livable Communities.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 132

Requesting the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to establish a mechanism to facilitate improved coordination and access to services to senior citizens in Virginia. Report.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 15, 2010

Agreed to by the Senate, March 2, 2010

WHEREAS, in August 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new life expectancy tables that indicated the average 65-year-old senior citizen can expect to live to almost 84, and that newborns in America can expect to live to about 78 due in part to the declining death rate; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2007 there were 37.9 million people age 65 or older in the United States, and the projected population of people age 65 or older in 2050 will grow to approximately 88.5 million; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department for the Aging indicates that "the population of Virginians age 60 and over will grow from 14.7 percent of the total population in 1990 to almost 25 percent by 2025 when there will be more than 2 million Virginians in this age group"; and

WHEREAS, the Department indicates further that the "number of Virginians age 85 and older will increase five times faster than the state's total population by 2025, and that Virginia's older population is growing more racially and ethnically diverse, reflecting the growing racial and cultural diversity of the Commonwealth and the nation"; and

WHEREAS, such tremendous growth in this age group will contribute to the increasing demand for services to the aged; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's health and social services agencies deliver vital and essential services to senior citizens, but services are not always conveniently located or accessible; and although information about services is available online, many senior citizens do not own computers or have access to them or are not technologically proficient; and

WHEREAS, efforts in other states to coordinate information and access to health, social, educational, financial, housing, employment opportunities, reporting of abuse, and other services for senior citizens to provide one-stop shopping for information have been extremely successful, effective, and cost efficient, making the lives of senior citizens easier by assisting them in as many areas as possible; and

WHEREAS, in many states, one-stop shopping is a model of coordinated services among several state and local agencies and community organizations, and coordinated services promote collaboration, communication, seamless delivery of services, and networking of the multitude of federal, state, and local services and entitlements to seniors; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department for the Aging has presented to the Governor and the General Assembly a four-year plan that addresses efforts for collaboration and coordination of services for older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department for the Aging, with the active and ongoing involvement and support of the Commonwealth's 25 area agencies through the No Wrong Door service coordination program, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, and initiatives of the Older American Act, provides comprehensive services and conveys information to persons in need by telephone and Internet at community locations; and

WHEREAS, coordinated services will enable many senior citizens to remain independent and live more securely in their own homes while maintaining their quality of life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Secretary of Health and Human Resources be requested to establish a mechanism to facilitate improved coordination and access to services to senior citizens in Virginia.

The Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of his progress in meeting the request of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2011 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

