



Florida Association of
Aging Services Providers

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Florida Association of Aging Services Providers

Guest Editors: Tourea Robinson, Aging True Community Senior Services & Josh Jensen, Aging Matters in Brevard

Message from the President

By Darrell J. Drummond, Council on Aging of St. Lucie, Inc.



2022 Florida Conference on Aging
August 22-24, 2022

I am still floating on air with satisfaction from the Florida Council on Aging (FCOA) Conference held in Orlando last month. It was a joy seeing everyone for the first time in over two (2) years and witnessing the participation of our membership and invited speakers. The vendors returned in good numbers and the breakout sessions allowed for important information sharing and debate on all sides. The intensive which was organized by Florida Association of Service Providers (FASP) and conducted by the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) on e-CIRTS was well received and provided very helpful information to our membership as we acclimate to this new system.

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At the conference we were able to install John Clark, retired CEO Council on Aging of West Florida into the FCOA Hall of Fame and elevate him to the status of Board Member Emeritus for FASP. We are so grateful for the years of dedicated service John provided to the Florida Aging Network.

Part of the discussion this year is the impact inflation and the shortage of qualified workers is having on our ability to provide service to our clients. This year we are faced with the need to bring on new employees at a higher wage in order to attract good talent for critical positions. As we navigate this new work environment, it is critical that we remember the long term dedicated employees we currently have on staff. The movement of the starting salary rate upward will compress the wage paid to current employees which, over time, may lead to resentment and dissatisfaction by long term employees. We must press for rate increases that allow for us to move our salary ranges proportionally to maintain an equitable salary schedule across the entire agency. Our Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) will need to work with us to ensure that we are positioned to successfully meet the needs of our growing client base. Clearly, what is paid to our workforce will dictate what success we will achieve over time.



Finally, let me discuss the issue of our growing senior population here in Florida. Often forgotten is the reality that seniors represent the greatest financial contributors to our state's economy. Through their years of hard work and accumulation of assets, seniors provide the basis for a strong financial structure within county governments, yet require the least amount of assistance for their daily needs. Seniors pay taxes such as schools and don't have children within those systems. What is fascinating is seniors require the greatest amount of assistance, generally in the last six (6) months of life. As advocates for seniors, our responsibility to ensure services are available to this most valuable population (MVP) ahead of the end stage of life which improves and extends their years of enjoyment. We have always known that it is far more cost efficient and effective to maintain our clients within their homes versus long term care facilities. Our need for expanding home community-based services must be our top priority as more seniors become a part of Florida.

Darrell Drummond





Partners in Providing Healthcare

By: Josh Jensen, President & CEO, Aging Matters in Brevard

Everyone in the Aging Network understands the importance nutrition has with a senior's overall wellness and aging in place. Within hospital systems, the concept isn't new nationally, but some have not yet fully embraced the importance of nutrition in discharge planning of older adults. Specifically in East Central Florida, two hospital systems are very interested in partnering with nutrition programs as another way to avoid hospital readmission penalties.

October will mark the 10 year anniversary of the US Department of Human Services implementing the "Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program" (HRRP) for hospitals treating Medicare patients. The goal of the program is to improve care coordination to avoid unnecessary hospital readmissions by assessing penalties for Medicare eligible patients who are re-admitted to the hospital within 30 days of discharge. The penalties can be as high as 3%, which may not seem like a lot, but it can potentially be millions of dollars in lost revenue to the hospital.

Because so many providers have waiting lists, hospitals and their foundations are becoming interested paying for meals for their at risk patients for a minimum 30 days following discharge. Meals on Wheels America has been demonstrating for years the value nutrition plays in the health care continuum and especially with discharge planning. In addition, the volunteers who deliver the meals regularly and get to know the clients can many times identify that there may be an issue and possibly prevent a hospital readmission. All of these things are very low cost and very effective in assisting hospital systems goals. As mentioned previously, these kinds of partnerships have been effective in other parts of the country, and hopefully providers can demonstrate value here as well.



[Click this link to go to the eCIRTS Learning Page](#)

Ecirts update: [Unknown SSN Workarounds](#)



Have questions?

Check out the new [eCIRTS document](#) designed especially to help make your transition to eCIRTS as smooth as possible!

To be included in the DOEA eCIRTS newsletter emails, please use the sign-up form provided here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/WuuMruR/ecirts>



Dial 988 IN A CRISIS

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's new number begins July 16th

Health News Florida (usf.edu)

Counselors in Florida have been preparing for the abbreviated number, which proponents say will be easier to remember in a crisis. They also hope it improves access to services, decreases unnecessary interactions with the police and saves lives.

Starting July 16th, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline will change from a 10-digit number to just three digits – 988. Proponents say the number — which can be used in place of the current 800-273-TALK — will be easier to remember or dial in a crisis. They also hope it improves access to services, decreases unnecessary interactions with the police and saves lives.

Callers will be connected to a trained counselor and receive counseling, resources or referrals. Mobile units may be dispatched in some cases, where available. The Crisis Center of Tampa Bay will be taking the calls in Hillsborough and Charlotte counties. Spokesman Ken Gibson said the center's staff receives about six weeks of training to effectively help people in distress. He says the center was already taking calls when people dialed the old lifeline number, which will still work.

"If somebody is having thoughts of suicide, they're in an emotional crisis, and they're in that heightened emotional state, 988 is easier to remember than 800-273-TALK and then translating those letters into numbers," Gibson said. "It's a simpler process, which is what you want in that type of situation."

Gibson anticipates the simplicity of the new one could result in a lot more people calling. National estimates expect call volume to jump from 4 million to 12 million calls in the first year, and there has been concern in some states about the readiness to handle the increased call volume.

Gibson said he does expect to see much higher call volumes to 988 — especially initially — and that the center is actively recruiting more staff. Gibson said the 988 line also has backup systems in place in case a call center gets overwhelmed.



"The infrastructure, the network, has already been there," Gibson said. "The really new thing is that it's a new entry point for people to connect to this system of support."

The 988 hotline comes amid a mental health crisis in the U.S. and Florida.

Federal data in 2021 show 31.6% of adults in Florida reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder, which is on par with national numbers. Suicide deaths are increasing, as well, especially among people of color, youths and people in rural areas.

The new number can be accessed on landline and cellphone. The previous number, 800-273-TALK (8255), will continue to work after the 988 launch.

New AARP Florida Poll: Voters 50+ May Tip Scales in Midterm Election

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – September 7th, AARP Florida released key findings from a [2022 election survey](#) that shows candidates should pay close attention to Floridians age 50 and older, with issues such as inflation, Social Security and Medicare, and taxes top of mind for these voters. Florida residents 50+ are a crucial voting bloc, consistently showing up to the polls and making a key difference in election outcomes in Florida. In the state's 2018 mid-term elections, the 50+ made up 62% of the electorate.

Gov. Ron DeSantis leads former Gov. Charlie Crist 50% - 47% in the race for Governor among voters overall, thanks to a 7-point lead among voters 50+. Among the 50+ population, white voters favor DeSantis by 17%, Hispanics are almost evenly divided, and Crist leads among Black voters 78% - 18%. For the U.S. Senate race, Senator Marco Rubio has a narrow 49% - 47% lead over Congresswoman Val Demings. The Senate race is similar to the contest for Governor across demographic groups among voters 18+ and 50+.

AARP Florida State Director Jeff Johnson said, “Florida voters 50 and older are a critical voting demographic that all candidates are competing for in this midterm election. With the price of necessities like groceries, housing, and health care so high, Florida residents want their leaders to provide solutions to inflation and the rising cost of living. The message is clear, if candidates want to win, they should pay attention to the issues that matter to Floridians 50-plus.”

The [survey](#) also found:

- A significant majority (76%) of voters overall think the country is headed in the wrong direction, while 51% think the same about the direction of the state.
- Only 44% of voters overall say the economy is working well for them, with 63% saying they are worried about their personal financial situation.
- The vast majority (90%) of voters 50+ say they are extremely motivated to vote in the November election.

AARP commissioned the bipartisan polling team of Fabrizio Ward & Impact Research to interview 1,626 likely Florida voters, which includes a statewide representative sample of 500 likely voters; an oversample of 550 likely voters age 50 and older for a total sample of 860; an additional oversample of 262 Hispanic likely voters age 50 and older for a total sample of 400; and an additional oversample of 314 Black likely voters age 50 and older for a total sample of 400. The survey fielded between August 24-31, 2022. The interviews were conducted via landline (30%), cellphone (35%), and SMS-to-web (35%). The margin of sampling error for the 500 statewide sample is $\pm 4.4\%$; for the 860 total sample of voters 50+ is $\pm 3.3\%$; for the 400 total samples of Hispanic voters 50+ and Black voters 50+ is $\pm 4.9\%$. Surveys were offered in English and Spanish.

For more information on how, when and where to vote in Florida, visit aarp.org/FLvotes.



Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

The ACP is a benefit for low-income families to afford high-speed internet. Families will be able to afford fast and reliable internet at home, which, as we all know, is a basic life necessity. This program has the potential to change lives.

The ACP provides up to \$30 per month (or \$75 per month on Tribal Lands), making many internet plans FREE. The program also provides a one-time discount of \$100 for a laptop or tablet. Families that receive free and reduced school lunch; WIC or SNAP benefits; or are enrolled in other programs like Medicaid, Head Start, or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) qualify.

<https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/do-i-qualify/>

Alleviating loneliness may slow cognitive decline

Researchers at the University of Michigan School of Public Health found that alleviating loneliness in older adults may help slow cognitive decline, with the greatest effects seen among women and those older than 65, according to a study published in the journal *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. "Our study finds that there is an association between loneliness and memory aging, suggesting that society, family members, or friends and neighbors should pay attention to older adults' emotional support or social support as we find that loneliness has a tremendous effect on the individual's memory aging," said study co-author Xuexin Yu. [Click here for the Full Story](#)

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Humana | Healthy Horizons™

Congratulations to the 2022 Humana Healthy Horizons FASP Award Winners



These distinctions are bestowed to those who have:

- Added value to the service benefiting and being delivered to elders
- Gone above and beyond to provide customer service and ensure customer satisfaction
- Developed community resources and support for provided services
- Demonstrated a high level of commitment to excellence

Humana Healthy Horizons Senior Volunteer of the Year Award

Congratulations to Diana Day of Senior Friendship Centers on her recent selection as the Humana Healthy Horizons Senior Volunteer of the Year. The award was announced at the Florida Conference on Aging on August 24, 2022 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando. The award included \$500.00 for Ms. Day and \$500.00 for Senior Friendship Centers.



Erin McLeod, Darrell Drummond,
Diana Day & Jaimie White

Past Senior Volunteer of the Year Award Winners

2021 Seth Thomas Miller

2020 Denise Hegenner



Darrell Drummond, Jaimie White,
Diane Rhonelli & Irene Soto

Humana Healthy Horizons Scholarship Awards

Congratulations to Diane Rhonelli of Senior Friendship Centers and Irene Soto of Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services on their recent selection as the Humana Healthy Horizons Scholarship Award winners. The award winners were presented with a Full Conference registration, 1 night stay at the Hyatt Regency Orlando and \$50 on August 24, 2022 at the Florida Conference on Aging.

Humana | Healthy Horizons™

Humana Healthy Horizons Best Direct Service Employee of the Year Awards

Congratulations to Brian Taylor of Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services on his recent selection as the Humana Healthy Horizons Best Direct Service Employee of the Year. The award was announced at the Florida Conference on Aging on August 24, 2022 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando. The award included a one year membership in FASP, a Full Conference registration, one night stay at the Hyatt Regency Orlando and \$500.00 for Mr. Taylor and \$500.00 for Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services.



Darrell Drummond, Brian Taylor & Jaimie White



Congratulations to Shane Swords of Aging True on his recent selection as the Humana Healthy Horizons Best Direct Service Employee of the Year. The award was announced at the Florida Conference on Aging on August 24, 2022 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando. The award included a one year membership in FASP, a Full Conference registration, one night stay at the Hyatt Regency Orlando and \$500.00 for Mr. Swords and \$500.00 for Aging True.

Terri Barton, Shane Sword, Darrell Drummond & Jaimie White

Past Best Direct Service Employee of the Year Award Winners

2021 Frances Brea Duran

2020 Belkys Poueriet

2019 Lizbeth Miguel

2018 Carole Ware

2017 Ed Gines

2016 Paula Jory

2015 Sherry Tucker

2014 Toula Wootan

2013 Paulette Kozlowski

2012 Lori Radice

2011 Debbie Slade

2010 Therese Pokryfke



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