

# **Governor's Cabinet on Chronic & Long Term Care**

**Thursday, May 11, 2006**

## **Meeting Notes**

### **Members Present:**

**Corinne Calise Russo, Director, Department of Elderly Affairs,  
Co-Chair**

**Ronald A. Lebel, Esq., Director, Department of Human Services**

**Philip A. Sheridan, designee, Department of Business Regulation**

**John Young**

**Frank Spinelli**

**Paula Parker**

**Mary Ann Ciano**

**Maria Nunez**

**Elaina Goldstein**

**Holly Garvey**

**Lisa Fleury**

**Joan Kwiatkowski**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

**Corinne Calise Russo, Director, Department of Elderly Affairs,  
Co-Chair**

**Chairwoman Russo opened the meeting at 1:10 p.m. with welcoming remarks and a review of the previous Cabinet meeting minutes for**

**any additions and/or corrections. The meeting minutes of the March 16, 2006 were approved without change.**

## **The Point**

**Lisa Fleury, Manager of The Point**

**Ms. Fleury reported that The Point, an educational and call center for seniors and adults with disabilities, established by DEA opened for business on November 1, 2005, staffed with 6 experienced Benefits Specialists. The Point receives calls Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with extended hours on Tuesday and Thursday until 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:30 to Noon. In December, The Point added 6 additional Benefits Specialists to assist seniors in completing their RIPAE applications; and have transitioned to assisting with Medicare Part D. The Department of Human Services added 2 more Benefits Specialist in January to assist caller who are beneficiaries of both Medicare and Medicaid. Ms. Fleury stated that more than 14,300 calls were received in a five month period; callers experienced a 2 to 3 minute wait time. Call tracker software is recording the age, ethnicity, and the subject of every call. The Point currently has 2 Benefits Specialist that are bilingual in English and Spanish. All Benefit Specialists have access to a telephone translation service which offers translators of more than 35 languages. Prior to opening all Benefit Specialists were trained in customer service skills, Alliance of Information and Referral Systems Standards (AIRS) and call tracker. Ms. Fleury also stated that the**

subject matter training completed by all Benefit Specialists include Medicare Part D; RIPAE; LIHEAP; Medical Assistance; RIPTA; Rhode Island Relay; Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plan Options; PACE; the Food Stamp Program and SHIP. She praised The Point staff for their ongoing training for pertinent topics relevant to seniors and adults with disabilities as well as their involvement in public outreach events.

Paula Parker congratulated Ms. Fleury on a job well done; reiterated positive feedback from legislators on the effectiveness of The Point. Director Russo stated that she has received a number of letters from seniors, who have called The Point on several occasions, commenting on the good experience and positive exchange with staff. She also announced that the Governor will formally announce The Point at a Press Conference scheduled for May 23 at Sparrow's Point 3 in Warwick.

## **Benefit Screener**

**Frank Spinelli, Department of Human Services**

Frank Spinelli stated that the updated Office of Health and Human Services web page featuring the Benefit Screener and Resource Directory will be rolled out to the public in July. The home page will be available in English, Spanish and Portuguese. The Benefit Screener will have a complete list of benefit programs available to residents. The software will allow residents to enter personal

information to determine their program eligibility. Residents could use the “contact us” option to email their contact information to the agency for a callback. The benefits application process will be done on line in the future. The Resource Directory is an online search engine to locate social service providers, their services and accessibility to facilities and social venues in the state. The data base includes the Crossroads Rhode Island Red Book and additional information addressing quality of life issues valuable for seniors, children and adults with disabilities.

## **PACE in Rhode Island**

**Joan Kwiatkowski, President and CEO, Carelink**

Joan Kwiatkowski made a presentation on PACE, Program for all Inclusive Care for the Elderly, which offers a complete range of health and personal care needs as well as supportive services, all designed to keep frail adults 55 years old living in the community without jeopardizing their health or safety. Adults who are eligible for Medicaid only or are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare may enroll in PACE at no cost. However, adults eligible for only Medicare will pay a monthly premium for services. Ms. Kwiatkowski reported that clients are provided with transportation to the facility for their comprehensive medical, dental, rehabilitative services and day care needs. Homebound clients are cared for by medical staff on a regular cycle of home visits. PACE is a Medicare Part D provider for clients. Enrollment or discontinuation of services may be done on a monthly

**basis.**

## **Office of Elder Protection**

**Paula Parker, DEA**

**Paula Parker reported that MaryAnn Ciano has been appointed Acting Supervisor of the Protective Services Unit after Joyce Hall's retirement in May. DEA is currently recruiting for a new staff attorney due to the May retirement of John Smollins. The attorney will be assigned the legal duties as cited in the Older Americans Act and be more involved in the judicial process of the Protective Services Unit. The After Hours Program is funded in the proposed budget; the transition will take place in the new fiscal year.**

**Ms. Parker stated that the bill expanding in-state over site of the Ombudsman Program is being heard today. Also, the Committee to Study Probate Law is reviewing the current policy on public guardianship as it pertains to clients in the community and the hospital.**

## **Other Business and Announcements**

**Director Russo stated that in an effort to keep the state's aging population living independently in the community; a meeting is scheduled for July 13 with the educational director of the Rhode Island Builders' Association to discuss universal building design.**

**John Young reported on Bill S 2628, relating to medical assistance –long-term care service and finance reform which requires DHS to implement a model system for integrated long-term care that expands the capacity of the long-term care system as a whole to support consumer choice and independence. Director Lebel voiced his concerns regarding the global budgeting process outlined in the bill. Elaina Goldstein mentioned that Rep. Norton introduced the Home Modification Loan Bill allowing both renters and home owner who are elderly, disabled or have a disabled family member to borrow \$25,000 for home modifications. The bill is still before the Finance Committee.**

#### **Public Comments**

**None.**

**Director Russo adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m. and reminded the group that the next Cabinet meeting is scheduled for July 13.**