

# SENIOR CONNECTION

Information for Seniors & Caregivers

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## FMAP and Aging in Massachusetts



By Robert P. Dwyer, Ph.D.,  
Executive Director

If you pay attention to news coming from Congress and from the State House, you may have heard a lot about FMAP. FMAP stands for Federal Medical Assistance Percentages, often referred to as Federal Financial Participation. This refers to the funding that the Federal government extends to States as the Federal share of Medicaid. Extending this to the States allows the extending of Medicaid services, as well as expenditures for other programming that is medially or socially related.

The fact is that NOT having this money will severely cripple the State budget, reducing expenditures by approximately \$600 million in Massachusetts alone! According to a report from the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, "If Congress does not extend the enhanced Medicaid matching funds in

last year's Recovery Act, most states will cut public services or raise taxes for the fiscal year that begins July 1 by even more than they are already planning – laying off tens of thousands more teachers and other public employees, cutting education funding more sharply, and further reducing payments to health care providers and other private firms. Without more federal aid, state budget-closing actions could cost the national economy 900,000 public- and private-sector jobs (nationwide). These findings — from a review of state budget documents, news articles, and interviews with independent budget experts in most states — come on top of new federal data showing states, localities, and school districts have cut 231,000 jobs since 2008, including 22,000 jobs in May alone. Such cuts slowed the pace of economic growth in the first quarter of 2010 by one-half of one percentage point, federal data show."

For those of us with an interest in services for elders, the FMAP issue will mean a cut to services of over \$12 million. Currently, there are around 2000 seniors in need and sitting on waiting lists across the Commonwealth. They are waiting for basic home care services to assist them with activities of daily living. Programs that have been waiting in the wings for two or more years may be heading back to the shelves because funding is in question.

(con't on pg 2)

Most, though not all of the Massachusetts State delegation in Washington supports the FMAP funding. Others have offered a compromise that has been rejected. In response to recent inquiries Congressman Edward Markey, the dean of the state's delegation, said in an emailed statement: "FMAP funding is a vital lifeline for Massachusetts and the vulnerable residents of our state who depend on the health care benefits enabled by this federal funding. Extension of the temporary increase in FMAP funding provided to all the states as part of the Recovery Act is a top priority. I look forward to working together with our Delegation in the effort to pass this FMAP extension into law when Congress reconvenes next week." Congressman, we hope you are correct.

In the meantime, let's all pay attention to the news, and make opportunities to support the FMAP funding when we are able to do so. Our participation, in seeking this Federal participation, is of the utmost importance.

## ElderCare 2010 Winner of CMAA's Raffle



John Belding, CMAA, Nita Bindman, and Nicole Jimino, CMAA

ElderCare 2010 was held 11 May, 2010 once again at The Manor in West Boylston where nearly 500 seniors and caregivers were offered the opportunity to talk to over 54 aging and caregiving network representatives. Informative sessions like My Life, My Health, and Getting your Loved One to Say Yes to Help! were offered. The Well-Kept Secret:Veterans Benefits session was standing room only. A grand time was had by all as you can see on the face of Nita Bindman, who was the winner of our raffle prize that was graciously donated by H&B Wine and Liquor.

### Helping You At The Crossroads of ElderCare

Are you a senior or caregiver helping an elder with questions about benefits programs, home-based services, day programs or exercise programs, ...etc? Are you a professional with similar questions to help your consumers? Then contact **SeniorConnection**, the Information & Referral Department of the **Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging**. We can help you clarify your problem(s) and identify potential resources to meet your needs.

Remember, *You Don't Have To Go It Alone!* We are just a phone call, an email or a walk away.

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### Older Americans Act Turned 45 on July 14th!

*Signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson.*

In 1965, there were about 26 million Americans age 60 and over. Today, there are 57 million older Americans 60 and over, with many more on the immediate horizon. Our senior population is not only growing larger, but becoming more diverse. Adults over 80 are our fastest growing group, and many will need long term care. Reliance on family members, who currently provide 80 percent of the long term care assistance for our nation's seniors, will increase.

The Older Americans Act has quietly but effectively provided nutrition and community support to millions. It has also protected the rights of seniors, and in many cases, has been the key to independence.

# Elder Abuse, the Devastating Effects



*Every year an estimated 2.1 million older Americans are victims of physical, psychological, or other forms of abuse and neglect. For every case of elder abuse and neglect reported to authorities, experts estimate that there may be as many as 5 cases not reported. Research suggests elders who have been abused tend to die earlier than those who are not abused, even in the absence of chronic conditions or life threatening disease." Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions*

Elder abuse is overlooked for several reasons. Sometimes it is because of the passive attitude of the elder who is involved. Other times it is the inability of the abused to seek help. The elder may fear further abuse if he/she were to report the mistreatment. If financial abuse is occurring, an elder may not be aware of the exploitation. Cultural norms can prescribe to the idea that elders become dependent as they age and are therefore in the control of those taking care of them.

Elder abuse can range from neglectful caregiving such as failure to provide groceries or assist with personal hygiene, to inflicting sexual or physical pain or injury, to hurtful name-calling and blame. In other cases, an elder may be experiencing self neglect; the elder may not be allowing themselves to receive proper care or refusing proper care unaware of the consequences. In any of these cases the elder being abused may be harmed in the long run, physically and psychologically. Some of the detrimental effects of abuse may include:

**Depression** – Depression among the elderly, especially those abused is extremely common and impacts daily living. Elders are more prone than younger people to be depressed because they may be experiencing major life changes compiled with abuse. Deaths in the family, retirement, and changes in living conditions may contribute to depression. “Studies of nursing home patients with physical illnesses have shown that the presence of depression substantially increased the likelihood of death from those illnesses.” (HealthyPlace) Research dictates that elder suicide becomes more common as we age. Elderly white men over the age of 85 have a risk of suicide twice that of the rest of the population.

**Loss of Self Esteem** – Some elders mistake abuse as a result or consequence of their dependence on others. It is important to remember that the elder being abused is never at fault. Elders sometimes think that their dependence on other people is overbearing, which leads to negative ideas about their own lack of independence.

**Stress** – A person in an abusive situation is more likely to feel stress about their living circumstances. Stress can lead to depression and be overall damaging to well being. Stress can also affect blood pressure and blood sugar.

**Fear** – Can you imagine being fearful in your own home? Oftentimes elders live with their abusers. This state of fear can be detrimental to mental health, causing extra stressors. The fear instilled in these elders sometimes affects socialization. Be aware if you notice a usually sociable elder withdraw from their typical activities.

**Weight Loss** – In some neglectful cases, elders are not receiving proper nutrition and care for their body. In these situations they are likely to lose bodyweight and become less healthy overall. If you notice any signs of weight loss, without obvious attributing factors, investigate the situation.

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**Disturbed sleep** – There is a common misconception that seniors do not need as much sleep as those who are younger. However, this is not true. Seniors tend to have different sleeping habits, but still require approximately 7-9 hours of sleep per day. When elder abuse is occurring, the elder may feel restless and constantly stressed, which impacts sleep cycles. This is detrimental to the mental and physical health of the elder. Disturbed sleep may even lead to depression.

Elder Abuse occurs more often than many people realize. In the last year alone Central Massachusetts residents reported 1850 cases of Elder Abuse to local ASAP's (Aging Service Access Points). Of these reports, 539 of them were opened and substantiated. These large numbers represent only a portion of larger statistics of Elder Abuse cases that are not reported yearly. It is important that if you, or someone you know, are in an abusive situation that you report it. In Massachusetts you may call 800-922-2275 or your local ASAP. Anonymous calls are accepted. If you are calling to report abuse in a Long Term Care facility please call the hotline 800-882-2003. In Massachusetts people sixty years or older are protected by a law that requires mandated reporters (social workers, police, nurses, emergency response) to contact authorities in the event of elder abuse.

References:

[http://www.sacramentojurylawyerblog.com/2008/08/facts\\_and\\_stats\\_on\\_elder\\_abuse\\_1.html](http://www.sacramentojurylawyerblog.com/2008/08/facts_and_stats_on_elder_abuse_1.html)  
<http://www.healthypace.com/depression/elderly/depression-in-elderly/menu-id-68/>

**Mary Ferketic**, a rising senior at the College of the Holy Cross is a 2010 summer intern for the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging. Both the Holy Cross Summer Internship Program and the Lilly Foundation Grant allowed Mary to be with the agency for ten weeks. This summer she assisted researching and writing articles for the agency's Senior Connection website. During her tenure she learned about the numerous issues that affect the elderly across our region and the many services available to assist the population. Mary will be a senior Environmental Studies major, on the college's Pre-Med track. Mary is also a member of the Holy Cross Women's Soccer team where she will serve as captain this year. Mary plans to continue learning about the elderly as she pursues a career in the medical field post graduation. Thanks to Mary for writing the article above.