

LCAO SUPPORTS HARKIN AGING INITIATIVE

October 10, 2001

Dear Senator _____:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) strongly support Senator Harkin's proposal, "Improving Aging Network Service Delivery" included in the Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill which is to be marked up in committee this week.

The initiative would greatly improve coordination of services across all federal agencies by convening an interagency task force on aging programs to address the challenges the aging network faces as it provides home and community-based services to frail older people through multiple federal, state and local resources.

The initiative would also enhance federal resources for the aging network by providing a 10-percent overall increase in funding for the Older Americans Act. This is a much-needed investment the federal government can make at a very critical time in the evolution of the network. As the baby boom generation ages, and as people are living longer, these demographic shifts are putting an enormous strain on the service delivery system. An increase in funding now would help the network serve more people and enhance its capacity to serve future generations. The aging network provides vital services to older people and also supports family caregivers, thereby enabling frail older adults to stay in their homes and live independently, delaying and in some cases preventing institutionalization. These goals are widely supported in the Congress and by the Administration through the "New Freedom Initiative".

We urge you to support the aging initiative in the chairman's mark this week. Thousands of older people and their families that are served by the aging network would benefit from the efforts proposed in this initiative to improve coordination and service delivery and to enhance federal resources for aging programs.

Sincerely,

America's Senior Care Pharmacists
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
American Geriatrics Society
American Public Health Association
Association of Jewish Aging Services
Catholic Health Association
Green Thumb, Inc.
Meals on Wheels Association of America
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Professional Care Managers
National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors
National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors
National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Association of State Units on Aging
National Council on the Aging, Inc
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Osteoporosis Foundation
United Auto Workers Retired Workers Department
United Jewish Communities