



***At the Center of it All.***

**MCOA Annual Report to the Membership  
Part II:**

**Recorded Achievements for FY07**

# Recorded Achievements by MCOA and our Standing Committees, Working Groups, Task Forces and Liaisons For 2006-2007

In FY07, MCOA continued to increase productivity and meet defined goals of our membership with the help of over 80 volunteers who assumed leadership positions. Our existing structure, revised four years ago, continues to support our many objectives and has improved the decision making process. **Standing Committees** have been established to conduct ongoing business of the association, comprised of directors from Councils on Aging and Senior Centers, with a quorum of three needed to meet. **Working Groups** were established to conduct related business of the association, comprised of staff members of membership organizations with a quorum of three needed to meet. **Task Forces** were established to work on specified time limited projects, comprised of willing eldercare professionals specifically appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Committee. **Community Liaisons** were established to provide ongoing communication with other eldercare organizations and statewide associations. The **Advisory Council** met four times last year and many ideas were debated and implemented. The **Board of Directors** met quarterly and stayed in contact via email. The Board is the final decision making authority. **This four page overview summarizes some of our accomplishments within these established parameters.**

## **MCOA Leadership:**

Below are some of the outstanding accomplishments that our teams were able to achieve; it is followed by a more detail accounting by the Chairs of each of the committees, work groups or task forces.

- Legislatively this year was tremendous success. As the year began we fought the Governor Romney's veto of our line item and then asked the incoming Patrick administration to overturn '9c' cuts that Romney implemented on his way out the door. We were successful in advocating for an increase in the Formula Grant allocation for FY08. We also worked on implementation of the legislation to make COAs mandated reporters under Protective Service regulations; and for education about new legislation that provide Property Tax Relief for Seniors.
- With allies, MCOA successfully work for open year round enrollment in the Commonwealth's Prescription Advantage program. We also worked in coalition to increase in the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for nursing home residents, and to pass the Equal Choice bill –finally implementing the Olmstead decision. As part of a broad coalition we advocated for the creation of a PCA Commission to provide oversight and support for this growing service.
- MCOA worked closely with two coalitions seeking to provide effective treatment and resources for seniors. The MA Aging & Mental Health Coalition has been working to bring much needed services to the populations we serve and the Massachusetts Geriatric Substance Abuse Task Force produced The Aging and Dignity Conference –possibly the most important conference held in this state. MCOA is fully committed in supporting both these initiatives. . We encourage COAs to take an active part in the development of these community based services.
- MCOA began a multi-year project with the Department of Public Health's Healthy Aging division to better coordinate resources and programs for municipal senior centers. The goal of a web based module seems attainable.
- MCOA continued to focus on encouraging a 'Wellness' philosophy within our councils on aging with the goal of transforming our senior centers into wellness centers.
- To assist with the implementation of Association goals, MCOA applied for and received an incentive grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs: over \$35,000 was awarded to conduct agency business and subsidize Association training events. MCOA pursued funding for the Circuit Rider Initiative from two separate sources but to no avail.
- MCOA worked with the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation to obtain a discounted license for local COAs to show videos at their senior centers. We will continue to pursue funding to purchase a statewide license.
- MCOA worked closely with LOHSC, the human service arm of the Mass Municipal Association. Our focus was on property tax relief, increased local aid and how each community's Disaster Preparedness Plans will make sure senior needs are included.
- In conjunction with the four regional associations, CIRCA, NSACA, WMACA, and CEMACA we offered regional trainings, The WMACA spring conference was actually a jointly sponsored event that included ASAPs and Public Health officials in the planning. In conjunction with CEMACA and WMACA we resurrected our spring Small and Rural COA Conference.
- MCOA explored partnerships with various other eldercare organizations to pursue joint legislative strategies and promote cross training between disciplines.
- MCOA continued to encourage membership in NISC, the National Institute of Senior Centers, and a division of the National Council on Aging. We have also worked collaboratively with ASA and send many members to the joint ASA/NCOA annual conference.
- MCOA continued as the fiscal conduit for the Keep Moving Program.
- MCOA reviewed the first five years of our staff certification project and made minor recommendations for improvements. By all accounts this new initiative is a tremendous success and is gaining support from town administrators. Each staff person who has undergone the process feels it was worth the time and commitment. Currently 59 individuals have either passed Director or Program Manager Certification.

In addition the Advisory Council and Board of Directors initiated, oversaw, and/or implement all the activities listed below of the Standing Committees, Working Groups, and Task Forces.

## **P.2 Recorded Achievements FY07**

**Standing Committees:** have been established to conduct ongoing business of the association, comprised of directors from Councils on Aging and Senior Centers, with a quorum of three needed to meet; The current list of **Standing Committees** are detailed below with their FY05 achievements. Membership to these committees is specified as either by election or appointment by the president. The President shall also designate a Chair(s) for each committee whose responsibilities include organizing business meeting(s) to accomplish their stated mission, notifying the committee members of meetings and then notifying the membership of the outcomes of those meetings. Membership on all committees is open to all directors in good standing (defined as membership dues paid and current on any other financial obligations).

### **Education/Membership Committee**

During FY07 MCOA conducted four membership meetings with the focus on: Disaster Preparedness with a team from EOE, DPH and MEMA at the September 2006 meeting; Implementing Measurable Outcomes at the December 2006 meeting; HIV and the Elderly at the February 2007 meeting and at the June 2007 membership meeting we debated "Hot Topics: Should there be Mandatory testing of Drivers 85+ and Should Seniors be Exempt from Property Tax Overrides". During the business portion of these meetings reports were submitted from our Standing Committees, Working Groups, Task Forces, and Liaisons.

### **Legislative Committee**

Fiscal Year '2007 was another successful year for the Legislative Committee and the membership. We advocated for and received an increase in Formula Grant funding; and cultivated new relationships with several members of the legislature. In cooperation with our elder service partners, we successfully advocated for passage of Equal Choice, an increase in the personal needs Allowance (PNA) for nursing home residents; the formation of a PCA Council, and for year round open enrollment for the Prescription Advantage Program. The committee also worked to have new bills filed to further develop property tax relief for the elders of the Commonwealth; and testified and submitted testimony regarding the needs of elders to the Patrick transition team. The June membership meeting looked at proposed legislation to require driver tests for individuals age 85 and over.

### **Fall Conference Committee**

MCOA conducted a highly successful three day fall conference at the Sea Crest Resort with over 400 paid participants, 70 vendors and 100 workshops. This effort was supported by over 50 volunteers and 130 presenters. The 2007 fall conference will be held at the Sturbridge Host and Conference Center.

### **Personnel Committee**

An annual review of the Executive Director was conducted.

### **Finance/ Resource Development Committee**

The CPA firm of Boiselle, Morton, and Sansom, Inc. conducted a financial review of our agency. NO areas of noncompliance were noted. As expected the purchase of the copier continues to realize thousands of dollars in cost savings over out sourcing. MCOA implemented a Bulk Mail Program to save monies, however, concern was raised regarding the slow delivery of Bulk Mail and new timelines will have to be adopted if we continue to utilize this service. MCOA continues to pursue other cost saving strategies.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee selected a slate of officers that will serve as the leadership of the association.

### **Public Relations- COA Campaign Committee**

MCOA is halfway thru a multi year focus to develop strategies to increase the visibility of MCOA and local COAs. We have secured a \$5000 in kind grant services and have received a \$10,000 grant from American Express to develop a public relations/media kit that will be distributed to each local COAs. In addition we had developed a web site that will provide up to date legislative alerts, MCOA's annual calendar of events and other newsworthy items. The results were far less than we had hoped. A complete overhaul is in the works for FY08. MCOA had worked with WMACA on their weeklong coordinated PR campaign. The results are being reviewed and if successful we would like to take this statewide. More focus and energy is needed on the objectives of this Standing Committee.

### **Small and Rural COA Committee**

This committee met to examine need and refocus efforts on behalf of rural and smaller communities in our Commonwealth. A spring conference was conducted for small and rural communities focusing on developing services and programs for elders. Evaluations were quite favorable and indicated the need to make this event annual.

### **Governance Committee**

After five years of methodical review of our By-Laws, the Governance Committee rested.

## **P.3 Recorded Achievements FY07**

### **Standing Committees continued**

#### **Staff Certification Committee**

The committee reviewed and revised the certification process. The committee held several workshops for applicants and mentors and eventually awarded Certification to 3 COA Directors and 1 Program Managers. The award ceremony will be October 3, 2007 at our annual conference. There are now 35 MCOA Certified COA Directors and 24 MCOA Certified Program Managers. In addition the committee developed, for certified MCOA members, the procedure for the continuing education program a new requirement for re-certification. The committee established the certification process for FY08 which will include the third level of 'Aging Service Administrator'.

#### **New Director Orientation Committee**

With the assistance of Elder Affairs, MCOA has updated and distributed our New Director's Manual. This document is viewed as a work in progress and suggestions are welcome. Currently there we are experiencing a 10-15%/year turnover in our profession and the need to continuously update the Director Manual and to develop a curriculum and regional training schedule is essential.

**Working Groups:** have been established to conduct related business of the association, comprised of staff members of membership organizations with a quorum of three needed to meet; The current list of **Working Groups** are detailed below with their prescribed duties. Membership to these groups is open to all staff and board members of membership organizations. The President shall designate a Chair(s) for each **Working Group** whose responsibilities include organizing business meeting(s) to accomplish their stated mission, notifying the committee members of meetings and then notifying the membership of the outcomes of those meetings. The main purpose of each of these working groups is to provide support, training and information sharing. Any formal recommendations would need MCOA endorsement and thereby a vote by the membership. Attendance at these work groups has ranged from 15 to 150 depending on the agenda and meetings were scheduled by the leadership of each work group and varied from biannually to quarterly. **The following workgroups met during FY06 and submitted these brief reports:**

- **Supportive Day:** We have spent the past year working on the best practices manual, upgrading our programs along the way, sharing information on individual policies, sharing the ups and downs within our programs and lending technical support, encouragement to new programs, discussing the needs and relevance's of the Supportive Day Standards, and most importantly sharing tips. We have encouraged and mentored a number of new communities to start programs are looking forward to their opening.
- **Outreach Summit:** We met quarterly this last year and conducted trainings on "What's Stress got to do with it?"; stress reduction for caregivers including Tai Chi presentation; What to do in an Emergency.; Grief and Bereavement; Outreach through Group Facilitation; Working with your police department; MassHealth; Medicare Part D; Veteran's Services; Protecting your Client's Assets; the Registry of Motor Vehicle's Driving in Later Life Program as well as a Driving Evaluation Program for Elders; and we conducted training on how to advocate for your seniors from the National Consumer Law Center. We advocated for increased hours to better reflect the number of seniors residing in our communities. We promoted MCOA Staff Certification, LSW licensure and other career building skills. . We continued to advocate for elders as staff mandated reporters working with the newly mandated elder at risk program.
- **Volunteer Coordinator's:** This past year this working group focused on developing a Volunteer Manual that could be used locally. We also focused on how to best employ seniors who want to volunteer but are subject to early dementia. We also spent time sharing how local communities recognize and 'appreciate' volunteers for their work and left enough time to share information and problem solve.
- **Activities/Programming:** Did not meet.
- **Wellness Center:** Did not meet.
- **Board Development Working Group:** Did not meet.

**Task Forces:** During FY07 the President appointed, with authorization of the Board, the following special task forces to carry on the work of MCOA. All task forces act in an advisory capacity and all task force recommendations shall be referred to the Advisory Council and Board of Directors. Task forces are established to work on specified time limited projects but may evolve to working group or standing committee status with a vote of the full membership.

**Accreditation Task Force:** Several communities have formed a task force to promote and assist communities with the NISC accreditation process. The town of Hingham received this recognition in FY07.

**Elder at Risk Task Force:** The Upper Cape COA Consortium, a regional task force, worked in partnership with Behavioral Health Services of Cape Cod Healthcare to pilot a Cape-wide in-home mental health assessment program for EAR. Quarterly trainings for Outreach Coordinators and case managers have been held and also bi-monthly case reviews. All 15 Cape towns have participated in this project. A software program was developed as a universal intake tool and will assist COAs in identifying EAR client profiles and was distributed to all COAs at the Sturbridge Host conference in 2005. The Cape Cod Elderly Behavior Health Consortium won MCOA's 2006 Innovator of the Year Award for their leadership in this field.

## **P.4 Recorded Achievements FY07**

### **Task Forces continued**

**Technology Task Force:** This task force focused on two areas of need: capturing client usage data at our local senior centers, and disseminating information about services and programs to seniors and caregivers. Several software strategies were investigated and a plan to pursue funding was developed. This group also was pleased that the Upper Cape Consortium's At Risk Project is in the final stages of development and fully supports implementation statewide. Funding has been problematic.

**Property Tax Relief Task Force:** Provided educational awareness programs on recently passed legislation that increased opportunities for Property Tax Relief for Seniors; researched the inequities in the current system of state reimbursement to municipalities; and work on legislation that will enable seniors to take advantage of property tax exemptions and programs. The June Membership meeting focused on proposed legislation to exempt seniors for overrides and debt exclusions. Mayor David Cohen was the lead proponent.

**Transportation Task Force:** This task force monitored the developments of the state wide committee planning regional coordinated systems for all state funded programs.

**Mental Health Task Force:** MCOA participates on the MA Aging and Mental Health Coalition (MAMHC) which focused much of this year on legislative advocacy. Due to increased awareness, \$350,000 was earmarked in EOEAs' FY07 budget for 5 demonstration grants of elder behavioral health best practices models. Although this EOEAs' funding was not continued in FY08, strategies for successful legislative funding are now being planned for FY09. MAMHC continues to meet monthly with senior staff from DMH and EOEAs and to be represented on the DMH State Planning Council. The inclusion of elder behavioral health performance standards in the new procurement contracts for MA Emergency Services (Crisis Teams) was an important achievement as was the state wide elder mental health forums conducted by Secretary Carey and DMH Commissioner Childs to hear firsthand providers and consumer concerns.

**Newsletter Task Force:** Developed to review local COA newsletters and report to the membership as a whole about new programming and/or best practices.

#### **Save our Senior Centers/Senior Center Directors Project Task Force & Senior Center Model Task Force**

- Provide assistance to communities fighting to keep their senior centers open!
- Document, as an historical record, emergency situations in our network.
- Provide directors a toolkit of statistics, strategies and successful measures that have helped others during their crisis situations.
- Offer support, brainstorming, and personal assistance to any community in need.

**Emergency Preparedness Task Force:** This group was formed out of a training at a membership meeting in September 2006 with the specific purpose to develop an Emergency Preparedness Manual that could be disseminated by local Senior Centers. We plan to distribute this at MCOA's Fall 2007 Conference and make it available online.

#### **Additional Highlights:**

**Community Liaisons:** Appointed by the President and reporting to the Community Liaison Chair and the Steering Committee, the position of Community Liaison is established to maintain lines of communication with elder care associations, statewide task forces and other relevant organizations. Focus is on sharing legislative agendas and implementing cross training opportunities where possible. Directors of member COAs and senior centers are eligible and appointments last for a two year cycle. Reappointments are possible. Currently there are over 20 designated Liaisons opportunities.

**MCOA News:** The MCOA Newsletter was published 12 times this year. Over the next year we hope to save copying and mailing costs by making all of our newsletters available at our web site. Members will be given the option to continue to receive a hard copy by mail or elect to help us save by downloading MCOANEWS.

**AV Lending Library:** MCOA continues to provide a "lending library" of AV equipment available to COAs. It is estimated that we save over \$5000/year in providing our own onsite AV equipment.

**Version: October 4, 2007—work in progress- please submit any omissions to MCOA**