



At the Center of it All.

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

Recorded Achievements for FY08

Recorded Achievements by MCOA and our Standing Committees, Working Groups, Task Forces and Liaisons For 2007-2008

In FY08, 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 five 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 five page overview summarizes some of our accomplishments within these established parameters.**

MCOA Leadership: Major Achievements

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

- Legislatively this year was a tremendous success. After three years of trying, we finally secured enough funding to set the Formula Grant rate at \$7/elder/YEAR. In addition we received additional funding to establish new Incentive Grant programming. Coinciding with this increase, the Membership voted to raise our dues, which provided additional resources to operate our Association.
- MCOA received the “State Association Award” from the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC), a division of NCOA at their annual conference in Washington D.C. This honor should be shared with all the members who contribute to meet our mission, achieve our goals and complete our stated objectives.
Congrats!
- At last year’s fall conference, MCOA welcomed a new leadership team at EOEA. Talented, dedicated and accessible are the buzzwords that describe them best.
- In January, we met with EOHHS Secretary Bigby and representatives from the EOEA, the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Public Health to chart a course of cooperation between state and municipal government. This new administration is truly committed to preparing for the boomers and improving the existing service delivery system.
- 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 by repackaging existing services and introducing evidence-based programming into our 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 has improved its web site www.mcoaonline.com We now include a range of downloadable materials that are useful not only to the staff at our senior centers but also to consumers. We have recently added a ‘Bulletin Board’ where members can post inquiries for assistance.
- MCOA’s Executive Director was asked to join our Commonwealth’s team at the National Governor’s Association conference on Workforce Development and Civic Engagement. We hope to leverage this experience to create focal points at our senior centers that will provide volunteer and job opportunities for older adults.
- 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.

P.2 Recorded Achievements FY08

MCOA Leadership: Major Achievements (continued)

- 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.
- We reformed our Bylaws-Article III Membership and worked with EOEA to change the Formula Grant application process.
- 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.
- 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 63 individuals have either passed Director or Program Manager Certification.

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

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** is detailed below with their FY08 achievements. Membership on these committees is specified either by election or by 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 FY08 MCOA conducted four membership meetings with the focus on mental health. The September, December and June meetings had specialists provide an understanding of the various mental health needs of the older adult population and we showcased programs that provide assistance. Our February meeting was a roundtable where our membership shared their concerns about the need for additional services for mental health services.

Legislative Committee

Fiscal Year 2008 was another successful year for the Legislative Committee and the membership. We advocated for and received an increase in Formula Grant funding that provided us with \$7.00/elder for '09; and continued to cultivate new relationships with several members of the legislature. In cooperation with our elder service partners, we participated in the Safe Roads Now Coalition to ensure that all Massachusetts drivers remain safe on our roads; advocated for adequate mental health services for the Commonwealth's elders; continued our involvement with the Prescription Advantage Coalition; and worked on other legislation that would be of benefit to elders. The committee also worked to have legislation passed that would provide further property tax relief for the Commonwealth's elders.

Fall Conference Committee

MCOA conducted a highly successful three-day fall conference at the Sturbridge Host Conference Center with over 400 paid participants, 70 vendors and 100 workshops. This effort was supported by over 50 volunteers and 130 presenters. The 2008 fall conference will be held at the Sea Crest Resort.

Personnel Committee

An annual review of the Executive Director was conducted.

Nominating Committee

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

P.3 Recorded Achievements FY08

Standing Committees: continued

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 outsourcing. 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. A dues increase was approved and has resulted in increased staffing for FY09.

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 \$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 COA. In addition we had developed a website 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 FY09. 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 is planned for small and rural communities, focusing on developing services and programs for elders in early 2009.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee reviewed Article III: Membership, of our Bylaws and recommended a change that reorganized our membership into 4 categories: municipal COAs, non-profit eldercare agencies, for-profits, and individuals. Each category has a different dues structure and is entitled to a different set of 'privileges.' The membership passed these recommendations on June 20, 2008 and the current set of bylaws can be viewed at www.mcoaonline.com

Staff Certification Committee

The committee held several workshops for applicants and awarded Certification to 2 COA Directors and 2 Program Managers. The award ceremony will be October 16, 2008 at our annual conference. There are now 37 MCOA Certified COA Directors and 26 MCOA Certified Program Managers. In addition, certified MCOA members have begun the procedure for the continuing education program - a requirement for re-certification. The committee established the certification process for FY09 which includes 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 to 15%/year turnover in our profession. 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 biannual to quarterly.

Activities/Programming: Did not meet.

Wellness Center: Did not meet.

Board Development Working Group: Did not meet.

P.4 Recorded Achievements FY08

Work Groups, continued

The following workgroups met during FY08 and submitted these brief reports:

Outreach Summit:

We met quarterly this year and conducted trainings on Registry of Motor Vehicle's "Safe Driving for Elders" and "Family conversations about Alzheimer's disease, Dementia and Driving," as well as "ASAP 101" explaining what the Aging Service Access Point agencies provide – and how we can best utilize them. We also had Dr. David Fields – a Geriatric Physician – train us on how to work with medical providers and issues as they relate to our clients. The purpose of these summit meetings is to address the training needs and provide support for outreach workers statewide. A manual subcommittee reorganized the Outreach Manual to make it accessible for new outreach staff from MCOA website. We promoted MCOA Staff Certification and continued to advocate for increased hours to better reflect the number of seniors residing in our communities. In addition, we offered more opportunity to share best practices (what's working and not working) in a roundtable setting.

Supportive Day

We have completed the first edition of the Best Practices Manual for Supportive Day. It has been a wonderful experience for all of us who have participated in the process. We have encouraged ourselves and offered technical support. We have encouraged and mentored a number of new communities to start programs and we are looking forward to their opening

Volunteer Coordinators:

This past year this working group focused on mentoring, on ideas on how to best promote ones senior center to encourage volunteerism, and also introduced professionalizing volunteers, especially ongoing problems with office volunteers. They have continued to spend time on sharing recruiting, retaining and recognition ideas and left enough time to share information and problem solve.

Task Forces: During FY08 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 towns of Groton and Rochester received this recognition in FY08.

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.

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: The MCOA Property Tax Task Force continued to meet regularly at the Westwood COA, increasing our network through an extensive mailing list and membership that currently includes 36 representatives from: Councils on Aging, MAAO (Mass. Assoc. of Assessing Officers), MAOA, H.O.M.E., and Action for Boston Community Development. Elder Affairs Secretary Mike Festa invited one of our members to tape a cable show with him on property tax relief in August, 2008. A joint meeting was held between MCOA and the Assessors Association to review existing relief programs and to design an educational campaign. We also provided educational awareness materials 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 worked on additional legislation that will enable seniors to take advantage of property tax exemptions and programs.

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

P.5 Recorded Achievements FY08

Task Forces, continued

Mental Health Task Force: MCOA participates on the MA Aging and Mental Health Coalition (MAMHC) whose efforts this year included adjusting to the transition of the new administration. The coalition worked diligently to educate the New DMH Commissioner and others on the coalition's efforts, including the previous year's work on legislative advocacy and the MBHP Emergency Response study. In addition MCOA participated in the Elder Legislative Caucus, presenting to the Caucus compelling testimony on elder mental health issues. MAMHC supported MAOA in its release of its third edition of the Eliminating Barriers to Mental Health Guidebook. MAMHC also supported and participated in trainings for COAs which included: The Mass Geriatric Substance Abuse Task Forces, DPH "Get Connected" Substance Abuse training; and the Merrimack Valley Suicide Prevention Program. In addition, MAOA & BU's IGSW Aging and Mental Health Certificate program was conducted in collaboration with six regional mental health coalitions. MAMHC continues to meet monthly with senior staff from DMH, DPH, EOEA, The Mass Suicide Prevention Coalition, and the Mental Health & Substance Abuse Corporation of Mass, and MAMHC continues to be represented on the DMH State Planning Council.

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

Title III Task Force: This task force met and made several recommendations about improving the quality of this program. Ultimately a statewide forum is needed so all sides can share their thoughts about transforming the existing program to meet the needs of all older adults. Improved communication and the standardization of policies would be a good first goal.

Save our Senior Centers/Senior Center Directors Project Task Force & Senior Center Model Task Force: This task force monitored the 'health' of our system and catalogued changes to staffing patterns and budgets. At least 7 Senior Centers/COAs have been impacted by overrides and other fiscal woes. These have been threatened with severe cuts this fiscal year. We are actively archiving newspaper articles that chronicle these budget troubles. Several points we have learned this year include:

- Don't assume because you have a beautiful new building that it won't happen to you. Some of our members with active, state-of-the-art centers are on the "cut" list.
- Try to have a Rainy Day Fund. If you can save for a bad year with Emergency monies to cover part of your expenses it really helps.
- Don't Eliminate Programs – they are easier to add back when a skeleton Program exist.
- Support one another. Each one of the directors we talked with was thrilled to have support and know that someone cared. Many are unable to attend our meetings due to the budget cuts and need extended support.

Emergency Preparedness Task Force: This group was formed out of training sessions at a membership meeting in September 2006 with the specific purpose of developing an Emergency Preparedness Manual that could be disseminated by local Senior Centers. This plan was distribute this at MCOA's Fall 2007 Conference and is available online at www.mcoaonline.com

Additional Highlights:

NISC, NCOA, ASA: MCOA continued to promote the many benefits of joining our national affiliations. The resources these organizations provide will be invaluable to those who participate

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 website. 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 Alending 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 15, 2008—work in progress- please submit any omissions to MCOA