



# Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

## *Proposal for an Executive Order to Address the Needs of an Expanding Population of Older Adults*

**The Leadership Council on Aging Organizations (LCAO) urges President-elect Obama to issue an Executive Order establishing a White House Office on Older Adults (or, alternatively, the position of Domestic Policy Council Advisor on Older Adults) to develop, lead and coordinate cross-cutting initiatives to effectively address the needs of our country's growing population of older adults.**

**Rationale:** The aging of the Baby Boomer population, combined with increases in life expectancy and a decrease in the relative number of younger persons, has created a surge in the population of adults over age 65 that severely challenges an already fragmented, understaffed and inefficient healthcare system, increases burdens on family and informal caregivers, places enormous strains on retirement security and increases demands for scarce social support services, transportation and affordable, accessible housing.

Today, the Federal government provides critical services and support to older adults and family caregivers through a panoply of programs operated by numerous agencies within several Departments including, but not limited to, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Housing, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and the Social Security Administration. Yet there is considerable overlap, duplication, fragmentation and lack of coordination of programs and services. At the same time, there is considerable unmet need – need that will only increase as the population of adults over age 65 surges.

To avert the pending crisis, the Federal government must take action now to ensure that the critical needs of this expanding population of older adults are met by: marshalling and using all existing resources more effectively; promoting better coordination of services and programs; and identifying and working to meet unmet needs including the need to develop public-private partnerships with businesses and community-based organizations and collaborations at the Federal, State and local level. This can best be achieved through an Executive Order that establishes a single point of accountability within the Executive Office of the President and a clear mandate to effect change.

### **Leadership Council of Aging Organizations**

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## The Proposed Executive Order

To this end, we urge President-elect Obama to issue an Executive Order that, at a minimum, establishes an office or position to serve as a single point of accountability to undertake the following:

- (a) To develop, lead and coordinate the Administration's policy agenda to meet the needs of an aging America with respect to healthcare, long-term care services and supports, social support services, the workforce, income security, transportation, housing and civil justice.
- (b) To identify and engage key Federal government departments and agencies, state agencies, and private and not-for-profit organizations to improve coordination between and the effectiveness and efficiency of existing programs that are serving the needs of older adults, and to identify the need for additional capacity and new programs and services.
- (c) To identify and promote initiatives and activities that merit strong interagency collaboration to promote continued expansion of home and community-based health and long-term care services for older adults, address the needs of family caregivers, strengthen the direct care workforce and increase the number of health care professionals trained in geriatric care.
- (e) To coordinate a review of legislation, regulatory and other bureaucratic barriers across all Federal departments and agencies serving older adults that currently impede the efforts of government and the private sector to improve services and address the unmet needs of older adults.
- (f) To ensure collaboration and coordination among the various Departments and agencies that service older adults, including but not limited to the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Housing & Urban Development, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and the Social Security Administration.
- (g) To serve as a public point of contact on cross-cutting issues affecting older adults.