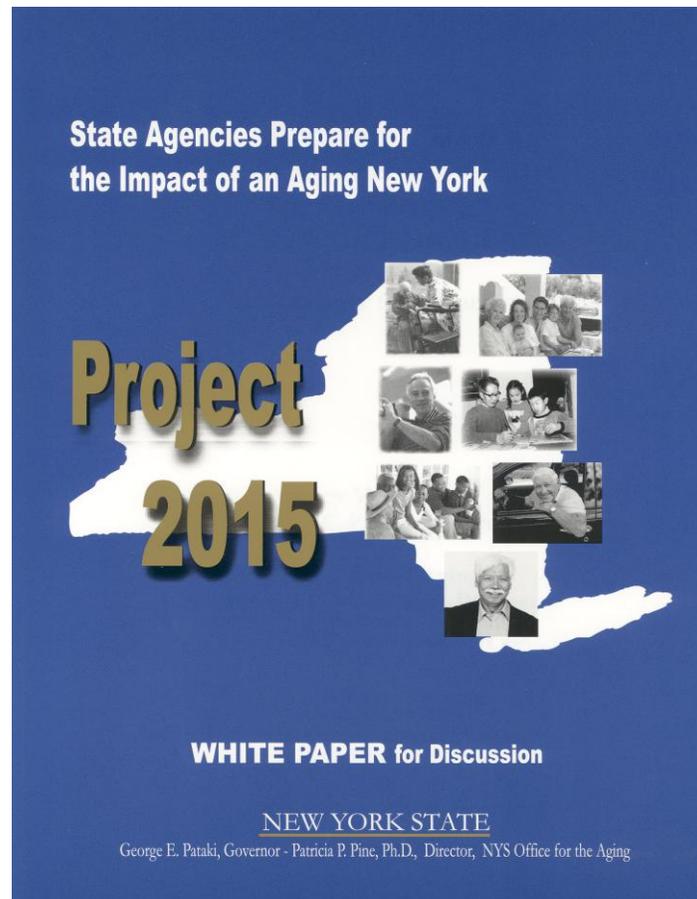


**Project 2015**  
**Preparing for the Impact of Demographic Change:**  
**New York's Aging and Diverse Population**



**STATE AGENCIES:**  
**STATUS REPORT 2004**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project 2015 is a process of planning, engagement and action by 36 participating New York State government agencies to prepare for the impact of the aging and increasing diversity of our state's population. This initiative, *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York*, began as a Governor's project in 2002. Through Project 2015, the participating agencies gained an understanding of several major demographic changes that our State will be experiencing over the coming 10 years; they deliberated the impact of those major demographic changes on individual agencies' policies, programs and products; and they identified strategies, action steps, and collaborations that they could employ to assure that their agencies would be prepared to meet the impact of our State's dramatically shifting population profile.

This Project 2015 Status Report provides an update on progress made by the participating state agencies – particularly in the areas of public engagement and collaboration – as New York prepares for the impact of our changing population. The New York State Office for the Aging would like to thank the participating state agencies that responded to the Status Report survey in the fall 2004; this Status Report reflects activities that took place among the participating agencies through the summer 2004. Additional information about Project 2015 is available at the following Web site: <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/explore/project2015/index.htm>.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Background*

Project 2015 is a series of endeavors to assist New York State in preparing for the anticipated changing demographics of the state early in the 21st century. New York State's population profile is shifting significantly due to several major demographic trends: (1) the aging of the State's population, due to increasing longevity among the State's already large elderly population and the impending passage of the large Baby Boom generation into the elder cohort, and (2) the increasing diversity of the state's population because of New York's very strong immigration and migration patterns, growth in the number and types of minority subgroups, and increasing longevity among various ethnic and special needs populations.

These evolving trends will result in dramatic changes in the characteristics and needs of the State's population, and these changes will have an impact on the policies, constituency make-up, programs, services, products and practices within our state. For example, workforce, caregiver, language, and dependency ratio issues; health, long term care, housing and transportation issues; service, program, and product design issues; opportunities for volunteers, intergenerational support, and technology; reliance upon preventive health care, nutrition, and wellness approaches to well-being; preferences for second careers and continued working

during the retirement years will be affected by our changing population.

In a 1998 planning meeting held by the State Society on Aging of New York State (SSA) and the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), Dr. Joanna Mellor, Past President of SSA, and Dr. Patricia Pine, Past Director of NYSOFA, identified the need to focus on the impact of New York State's aging population and, particularly, on the looming progression of the large Baby Boom population into the elder cohort. From this meeting, a joint initiative was instituted by SSA and NYSOFA, which resulted in the development of the document, *Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State: Articles and Briefs for Discussion*, which was published by the State Office for the Aging in 2000 and widely distributed.

This publication includes 24 articles and briefs written by over 40 professionals in the field of aging who discussed the future impact of an aging population in a wide variety of topic areas such as health, mental health, housing, informal caregiving, role transitions, legal services, trauma and aging, transportation, and other quality-of-life issues. Following distribution, the publication formed the basis for discussions in community forums that were conducted across New York State in 2001 by NYSOFA and SSA to discuss the topics presented in the Project 2015 articles and briefs.

### ***New York State Government's Project 2015 Initiative***

The interest created around the impact of the State's changing age profile prompted a dialogue between NYSOFA and the Governor's office to consider strategies for engaging state agencies in a planning process that would prepare them for various significant demographic profile changes anticipated through the coming years. In 2002, the Governor designated NYSOFA as the lead agency to design a government-wide policy and planning initiative, convene 36 cabinet-level state agencies to participate in the initiative, and manage the overall project. During 2002, the 36 state agencies established a workgroup with representation from senior staff of the agencies. The Governor's Office of Employee Relations and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation provided valuable assistance in facilitation and workgroup and meeting organization, and the Empire State Development State Data Center contributed significant demographic data to assist the agencies in their deliberations and planning. Additional participating agencies provided critical services to the project, including covering the costs of meeting space, printing Braille transcriptions of all documents, and conducting a project documentation process.

The purpose of Project 2015 is to create a process for state agencies to prepare for the future, and to do this by: (1) bringing attention to the increasing diversity and overall aging of our population and raising awareness of this among all agencies' staff, and (2) initiating a mode of planning by state government that will consistently

respond, across disciplines and across areas of responsibility, to the evolving impact of our changing population on our policies, programs and products.

Initial activities (1998-2001) in the Project 2015 effort focused on the impact of the aging of New York's population. In 2002, the areas for analysis for the Project 2015 planning process were expanded beyond the impact of the aging of New York's population to include the impact of several major demographic trends in addition to aging (immigration, migration, ethnic and racial diversity, changing family structure and disability), which have been incorporated into the ongoing activities of the project.

This wider umbrella more accurately portrays the State's dramatically shifting population profile, and each of the major demographic elements will have a profound individual, as well as interactive, impact on how the state agencies meet their future obligations. The issues to be addressed were stated in specific terms, and were common to all participating agencies. This promoted unity of purpose, provided a shared basis for collective discussion among the agencies, and resulted in a collection of agency Briefs that formed a cohesive, clear policy document for practical use.

### ***Project 2015 – White Paper for Discussion***

Each New York state agency participating in the project wrote an agency-specific Brief identifying their priority issue areas and

action steps to be considered by their agency to better meet the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by these population changes in New York. The first major product of the 2002 state government initiative was a policy document, *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York: White Paper for Discussion (2002)* (hereafter referred to as the White Paper). The Briefs can be considered both individually and collectively as a compendium of issues important in the state.

In the analysis and summary of the agencies' 36 briefs included in the White Paper, it was found that, through their participation in the activities of Project 2015, an unanticipated consensus had arisen among the agencies in identifying the initiative's ultimate goal: to create an optimal fit between the goods and services provided by New York State government agencies and the needs and preferences of the people being served by those agencies. As we learned from an analysis of the Project 2015 initiative, multi-group planning, in concert, around a unifying common issue, and in a cohesive, organized manner: (1) established a common bond among the participating groups, (2) had groups working toward a common goal, (3) encouraged sharing and collaborating among groups that had not occurred before, (4) produced ideas and strategies that would make the most out of the opportunities presented by the changing demographics, and (5) promoted creativity in identifying effective ways of meeting the challenges inherent in changing demographics.

The results of the initial work continue to have significant implications, and the White

Paper is being used as a basis for further, ongoing discussion by policy makers, citizens and groups across the State.

### ***Guide to New York State Government's Planning Initiative***

During the 2002 planning year by New York State government agencies, the *process* of designing and implementing Project 2015 and the *perceptions* of the agencies' leaders and staff who participated in the project were documented in a joint effort by the New York State Office for the Aging and the University at Albany's Center for Excellence in Aging Services. Several methods were used by the Center to collect information about the Project 2015 process and product development being used in the initiative: (1) in-depth interviews and focus groups of selected agency leaders and key state government agency staff who participated in Project 2015; (2) in-depth interviews of NYSOFA's agency leaders and members of the Project 2015 Management Team; (3) a personal interview with the Governor's oversight staff to Project 2015; (4) observation at several of the regularly scheduled Project 2015 interagency work group meetings; and (5) observation at the day-long Governor's Project 2015 Symposium, which took place at the conclusion of the Brief development process.

This information was used to develop a publication that NYSOFA released in 2003, *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York – Guide to New York State Government's Planning Initiative (2003)* (hereafter referred to as the Project 2015 Guide), which describes the framework of Project 2015. It is being used

and adapted by other states and by community leaders who are seeking to engage in a multi-agency or community-wide planning process around a common issue. The Project 2015 Guide provides information about the overall design, management, and implementation of Project 2015; it includes the perceptions of the participating agencies' leaders and staff about the initiative; and it includes the key elements of the Project 2015 initiative that have made it an ongoing success.

### ***Current Activities***

New York State continues to expand and develop Project 2015 planning and action steps at the state, national and local levels. Project 2015 publications are being used by government agencies and local communities for their work in preparing for a changing population. Within college and university settings across New York, the publications, *Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State: Articles and Briefs for Discussion* and *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York: White Paper for Discussion* are being used in classes as a basis for discussion about our aging population.

In its continuing role as manager and coordinator for New York State's Project 2015 initiative, NYSOFA is tracking the progress of activities and collaborations among New York State government agencies, whose Project 2015 activities continue to expand and evolve.

### ***State Agencies – Public Engagement Activities and Collaborations***

At the state level, NYSOFA continues to monitor activities and collaborations among

the participating state agencies in the project, and to facilitate planning and development in Project 2015. As part of this commitment, NYSOFA conducted a Status Report survey in the Fall 2004 to gather information from individual state agencies about activities and developments that state agencies have been engaging in through Project 2015. The Status Report survey asked the participating state agencies to provide information about their public engagement activities, and individual agency and collaborative activities that have been initiated or enacted within the Project 2015 initiative. Through Project 2015, agencies are building and developing innovative partnerships and are continuing to foster discussions with the public, including feedback for action from the wider community.

In addition to this Introduction, there are two sections of this Status Report, "*New York State Agencies – Project 2015 Public Engagement Activities*" and "*New York State Agencies – Project 2015 Collaborations*," which highlight the wide and varied array of activities that are being developed by state agencies through the Project 2015 initiative.

### ***Project 2015 – Local Planning***

New York State has taken steps to bring the Project 2015 planning process to the county level, so that local impacts are directly assessed and addressed. As part of this effort, NYSOFA began work with its network of 59 county-based Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in 2003 about Project 2015, and encouraged the AAAs to spearhead planning initiatives in each county. NYSOFA held a series of regional

summit meetings across New York in the Fall 2003, in partnership with host agencies (Clinton County Office for the Aging; Onondaga Department for Aging and Youth, Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center, and Westchester County Department of Senior Services), and the New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Over 150 representatives from area agencies on aging, representing 46 counties, participated in the five regional summit meetings.

NYSOFA also formed a partnership with the New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the New York State Coalition for the Aging to create materials for use in educating Area Agency on Aging (AAA) directors and staff about Project 2015; created a tool kit of materials for use by the AAAs -- *Project 2015: Tool Kit for Community Action (NYSOFA, 2003)* -- to educate and engage their county government and agency leaders about the demographic changes specific to their own communities; provided training at statewide conferences and at regional meetings; and continues to provide AAAs with ongoing technical assistance as they implement Project 2015 planning and action steps within their counties.

### ***Project 2015 – National***

The success of Project 2015 has garnered attention from other states. New York's communities are not alone in experiencing profound shifts in the make-up of their resident populations -- the populations of communities and states across the country are aging, and becoming increasingly diverse. Immigration patterns in the United States, including the in-migration of people from foreign countries and movement of these populations between states, have

dramatically increased both the diversity of many states' populations and the number of residents who speak little or no English. These shifts in states' demographic profiles present opportunities (skills, talents, a pool of new workers, etc.) and challenges (fewer caregivers, educational needs, communication gaps, etc.). As a result, New York has made a commitment to share information across the country so that other states and organizations may replicate or adapt New York's planning approach to preparing for significant demographic change. To date, New York has shared information and conducted training about its Project 2015 initiative in local, state and national presentations, including the National Governors' Association Health Policy Advisors (2003), the American Society on Aging/ National Council on Aging's annual conference (2003, 2004), the Southern Governors' Association conference (2004), the Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations Conference (2004), the State Society on Aging of New York conference (2002, 2003, 2004), and the New York State's Aging Concerns Unite Us conference (2002, 2003, 2004).

Several other states have been in contact with New York to look into how they may adapt New York's approach to their own state, using New York's Project 2015 model as they conduct their own state activities to prepare for the impact of population change. To date, these states include Arizona, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska (AAA), Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington (AAA) and West Virginia.

NYSOFA, at the Governor's direction, is convening a collaborative of diverse national organizations to serve as a vehicle to bring the Project 2015 model to scale for

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future-based planning around social and demographic change.

New York continues to build upon Project 2015's comprehensive, future-oriented, evidence-based strategic planning approach to preparing for the impact of demographic change and to shaping the direction of our programs and services to best fit the needs of people with the services available to them; the efforts of many people contribute to the work of Project 2015. Project 2015

provides a central framework and means to inform the public and to engage collaboratively and creatively as we continue to make New York communities vital, quality places for all its residents to live.

*Project 2015 materials may be viewed on the New York State Office for the Aging's Web site: <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/explore/project2015/index.htm>*

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

In the 2004 survey of activities, state agencies participating in Project 2015 were asked to respond to the following question: “What discussions, events, presentations, activities, etc. has your agency engaged in with the public during 2004?” Of the 31 agencies that responded to the survey question, *twenty-one* of the Project 2015 participating agencies described activities they engaged in during the year. The activities spanned a range from presentations specifically about New York’s Project 2015 planning process itself to presentations related to individual agencies’ Project 2015-related priorities; training, outreach and volunteer programs; Project 2015-related internships; and development of Project 2015-related Web sites.

The public engagement activities that are included in this section were described by the state agencies in response to the Status Report survey. The array of activities that agencies have included demonstrates the innovation by agencies to reach out in a variety of ways to different sectors of the public. The activities also reflect the important and lasting impact that Project 2015 has had in fostering such activity, and the continuing ability of Project 2015 to enable the participating state agencies to develop strategies to reach New York’s older and diverse population in creative ways.

## **Presentations, Discussions and Surveys**

### *Project 2015 Initiative – Presentations*

As the coordinating agency for the Project 2015 initiative, the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) made eleven presentations during 2004 about New York State’s changing demographics and the successful initiative our state has undertaken to prepare for the impact of an aging, more diverse population across the disciplines of the 36 participating state agencies in the Project. Presentations and discussions have taken place at state and national meetings, and by invitation to groups that have embarked on their own strategic planning initiatives. In September 2004, the Southern Governors’ Association (SGA) invited New York to present Project 2015 to the governors of the fifteen member states of SGA at their annual convention.

### *Promoting Awareness – Internal Agency Discussions*

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) conducted an internal conference in February 2004 to foster awareness among agency executives and key staff. This conference included more than 60 attendees, including representatives from the County Clerks who operate DMV offices in the upstate area. This conference was organized by the DMV team who prepared the original Project 2015 brief. Several experts on aspects of aging spoke at this conference.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

### *Assessment of Recreation Needs*

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPHRP) has focused its efforts on completing the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) that provides an assessment of recreation needs, utilizing general citizen and park professional survey results. The SCORP uses age as a factor in projecting recreation demand and needs for the year 2020. It further discusses the aging of the population and the impact it will have on recreation and the need to increase accessibility to parks and other recreation facilities.

### *Advocacy Services*

The Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled (CQC) contracts with a network of 31 not-for-profit legal and administrative advocacy agencies that assists tens of thousands of people with disabilities across the state on an annual basis. At the Commission's 2004 Advocacy Services Conference, the Commission's Chair gave a presentation on the changing face of New York State and challenged this network of agencies to think about how they can best seize opportunities to serve a population that is becoming older and more culturally diverse.

The Commission also invited the Director of the Geriatric Mental Health Alliance to speak to key Commission staff about issues impacting on the mental health of older New Yorkers. This was the first step of an ongoing relationship with the Alliance.

Through the Commission's Education and Training Coordinator, the agency continues to develop ongoing training needs. Additionally, CQC has a Speaker's Bureau, which trains its staff, as well as outside agency staff, on numerous topics.

Additionally, the Commission has recruited a bi-lingual (Spanish-English) intake worker to ensure that there is consistent bi-lingual coverage available for its toll-free help line, which receives nearly 3,000 calls monthly.

### *Higher Education*

The State University of New York's (SUNY) Mission Review II Guidance Documents ask all SUNY institutions to describe their respective campus enrollment goals regarding the mix and diversity of their students to the year 2010. In terms of age diversity, campuses were asked to extend campus plans to 2015, consistent with NYS's Project 2015 and were referred to the Project website. Campus responses will be reviewed by the Task Force and further incorporated into the Project 2015 outcomes, wherever possible.

### **Project 2015 State Agency Priority Issues: Presentations at Conferences, Public Forums and Meetings**

#### *Accessibility of State Agency Web-based Internet and Intranet Information and Applications*

The Office for Technology published a new state policy and standard in June 2004

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

requiring that all state agency Web sites, both internal and external, be accessible to persons with disabilities. The Office presented the policy at six different meetings and conferences around the state. Accessible Web sites and applications provide improved access to government information for a variety of populations not familiar with or able to use traditional electronic media. The policy is available at: <http://www.oft.state.ny.us/policy/p04-002/index.htm>

### *Assistive Technology to Increase/Maintain Independence*

The Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (OAPwD) made a presentation at the New York State Adult Abuse Conference (October 2004). This presentation focused on the use of assistive technology to increase/maintain independence of persons with disabilities/elderly. Approximately 35 service providers attended.

### *Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Issues*

Under the leadership of the OCFS Bureau of Adult Services, Protectives Services for Adults Program, the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) continues in its 12th year as a member of the Planning Committee of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Adult Abuse Training Institute. Additional agency involvement includes the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program, the Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College, and other state agency members to design and present at the Institute's annual statewide conference. At the fall 2004 Adult Abuse

Training Institute, OASAS presented two workshops on the topics of "Co-occurring Mental Health and Addiction Disorders Among the Elderly" and "Prevention of Addiction Problems Among Aging New Yorkers."

In June 2004, staff from the OASAS prevention and treatment units co-presented with the Clinical Director of "Senior Hope," an OASAS-certified outpatient treatment program located in Albany, and NYSOFA staff at the "Aging Concerns Unite Us" conference. The conference was hosted by NYSOFA in collaboration with the statewide Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The presentation covered the nature and scope of addiction problems among the elderly; prevention, risks, and protective factors impacting older New Yorkers in the face of alcohol and prescription, over-the-counter and illegal drugs, and local coalitions that need to be strengthened to better educate and support seniors and those professionals who provide services to seniors, and those charged with caregiving to seniors.

Many of the attendees at this workshop, representing senior care providers, reported that they were "shocked" at both the scope of the problem among their clients and the very simple steps that can be taken to access effective care.

Attendees noted their willingness to assist OASAS at the local level to increase knowledge and awareness in local communities. Representatives from various area agencies for the aging expressed their support for increased trainings and enhanced collaborations with OASAS.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

*Affordable Housing*

In May of 2004, the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) co-sponsored the Annual New York State Affordable Housing Conference of the NYS Association for Affordable Housing in New York City. This conference included a full schedule of speakers and events that engaged the public and private sectors, as well as community groups in the discussion of the preservation of affordable housing. One panel workshop was devoted to a discussion of the financing and development trends for special needs housing. The panel explored the creative funding and development methods that for-profit and non-profit organizations have employed to supply decent supportive housing to New York's at-risk populations.

*Building Code Accessibility Provisions*

A series of presentations on State Building Code Accessibility Provisions were conducted by Office for Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (OAPwD) staff for local building codes officials during 2004 (April through October). These trainings were designed to inform the local officials about accessibility provisions in the New York State Code to ensure access to all persons. More than 250 local building code officials attended these meetings.

*Consumer Scams*

In 2004, the Consumer Protection Board (CPB) delivered dozens of informational presentations on consumer issues to senior citizens and ethnic minority communities, speaking directly with thousands of New

Yorkers. Their work with senior citizens focused on current scams and other consumer issues affecting senior citizens. To help expand the CPB's work with senior citizens, they worked closely with AARP to schedule informational presentations.

*Consumer Action Day*

The Consumer Protection Board (CPB) developed and coordinated Consumer Action Day to provide information to New Yorkers, including senior citizens. They also participated actively in several conferences and fairs to provide information to senior citizens, including events organized by various elected officials.

*Consumer Information*

The Consumer Protection Board (CPB)'s work with ethnic minority communities continued to expand in 2004. Along with the Governor's Citizenship Unit, the CPB developed and delivered informational presentations in numerous Hispanic, Chinese, Eastern European and other ethnic communities, particularly regarding citizenship issues and consumer issues of importance to new immigrants. They delivered dozens of these presentations, many in languages other than English. In 2004 CPB developed new brochures targeted to this community, including Immigration Consultant Fraud, Basic Financial Transactions and Auto Answers. CPB also translated those brochures into Spanish.

CPB participated in conferences and fairs to provide consumer information to ethnic

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

minorities, including Alianza Dominicans Women's Conference, Conference on Dominican Affairs, Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, Puerto Rican Leadership Conference, Puerto Rican Festival in Rochester, Nassau County Central American Day Parade and Festival, African American Festival in Albany, Puerto Rican Youth Development Neighborhood Resource Fair, and the New York City Puerto Rican Day Parade. In addition, the CPB participated actively in the Hispanic Women of Long Island and Latina Women's Advisory groups, and the Chairperson was instrumental in the planning and executing of a Latina Women's Financial Conference.

### *Enhancing Mental Health Services*

Throughout the State, grassroots networks are partnering with the Office of Mental Health (OMH) to enhance mental health services. Consumer and family groups such as National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Harlem and Harlem Hospital have hosted events to provide public education forums about mental illness and mental health. A training program, "Cultural Competence: Maintaining and Asking Stance," has been presented to provider agencies, trade associations, social work education programs, and community groups throughout the State. Agencies have adapted the material to directly address specific community issues and to enhance service planning.

### *Housing Issues – Regional Forums*

The Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) collaborated with the Office of Mental Retardation and

Developmental Disabilities and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council in holding four Regional Forums on Housing Issues. These forums were designed to initiate a dialogue among key stakeholders in the area of affordable, accessible and integrated housing for people with developmental disabilities and to explore supports and services that are essential to living independently in one's community of choice.

### *Insurance Issues – Outreach to Senior Population*

The Insurance Department's Consumer Services Bureau expanded its marketing program in 2004 to include outreach sessions geared to the senior population. In 2004, the Consumer Services Bureau held more than 30 events to reach out to seniors. Venues included senior fairs, radio shows, special senior day events and presentations at libraries and hospitals.

### *Identity Theft*

The Banking Department made two presentations about identity theft targeted at senior groups during 2004.

### *Inclusive Outdoor Recreation*

At the First Annual Conference on Health and Wellness for Adults with Disabilities: Empowerment through Healthier Lifestyles (April, 2004), the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Accessibility Coordinator presented a seminar on inclusive outdoor recreation. The conference was sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New York State

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Department of Health. The seminar promoted activities available to persons with disabilities in the outdoors, including those offered by DEC.

A seminar entitled “Access for All - Opening the Outdoors to People with Disabilities” was presented to attendees of the NYS Independent Living Council’s Best Practices Workshop. The conference was held on September 20, 2004.

### *Mental Health – Public Comment and Input*

The Office of Mental Health (OMH) took a number of steps to substantially increase opportunities for public comments and input regarding New York’s public mental health system. In addition to increasing both formal and informal interactions and dialogue opportunities throughout the year, OMH conducted a series of informational briefings in April and May, 2004. Many interested stakeholder groups participated, including recipients, families, providers, advocates, and county mental health directors and their staff. Within these forums, stakeholders identified a number of areas and issues they would like to see addressed by OMH, and suggested ways of effectively meeting the needs of specific populations. OMH conducted public hearings in all five regions of New York State in the spring of 2004 to obtain formal, public response to the 2004-2008 Statewide Comprehensive Plan for Mental Health Services. OMH received testimony on a wide ranging array of issues.

The issue of the design and delivery of mental health services for older adults was a major focus of the hearing held in New York City, with the majority of individuals

presenting this as a major theme in their testimony. OMH has made the full text of this hearing testimony available on their web site at <http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/statewideplan/testimony/index.htm>.

This public engagement event also led to the initiation of collaboration with the newly formed Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York.

### *Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC) – Community Forums*

During July and August, 2004 the Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC) conducted Community Forums in New York City, Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo, that afforded an opportunity for the public to provide input about community needs and best practices. These forums and the planning that is resulting from them will further enhance our collective commitment in New York State to developing an approach to providing services in integrated settings that are appropriate to the individual needs of our citizens with disabilities, including the elderly.

### *Options for People Through Services (OPTS)*

With the start-up of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities’ (OMRDD) NYS-OPTS initiative, stakeholders throughout their system have been given an opportunity to improve the services and supports OMRDD provides.

Under OPTS, their service system has new opportunities to creatively address the special needs of older people. To ensure

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that the possibilities of OPTS are fully understood in all quarters of the state, OMRDD's Commissioner conducted more than one hundred sessions on the initiative. The Commissioner met with self-advocates, parent groups, family care providers, associations, local governmental entities, and provider agencies, including members of their multi-cultural network. In addition, in their Aging with Dignity (AWD) and End-of-Life Care (EOL) training forums, OMRDD continues to highlight the importance of the Governor's Project 2015 initiative.

### *Predatory Lending – Videos and Consumer Materials*

The Banking Department presented consumer materials and showed its Predatory Lending videos at public forums, including several that target seniors. The Annual "Golden Gathering" on Long Island is one of numerous events in which staff has participated.

### *Public Service Commission Outreach Events*

The Public Service Commission (PSC) planned/conducted over 70 outreach events to older consumers in 2004. Events included Home Heating Workshops, presentations at conferences, exhibiting at booths at fairs across the state, golden gatherings and environmental venues.

### *Reverse Mortgages*

The Banking Department made presentations to the Federation of Organizations on Reverse Mortgages in November 2004 (two separate locations).

### *Suicide Prevention Education Awareness Kit (SPEAK) Campaign*

Extensive use of both print and electronic media is an important element of the Office of Mental Health (OMH) *Suicide Prevention Education Awareness Kit (SPEAK)* campaign. In 2004, OMH launched multiple initiatives to raise the public's awareness and understanding of the need for suicide prevention and to combat stigma, including issues about older adults, depression and suicide. More than 10,000 SPEAK kits were distributed, with an additional 20,000 requests for specific booklets, posters, and resource guides in the process of being fulfilled.

The booklets are written for specific populations at risk: those who are depressed, teenagers, older adults, women, men, and college students. Requests for kits have come from a cross section of community organizations and individuals including primary care physicians and nurses; not-for-profit agencies; State psychiatric hospitals' outpatient programs; voluntary and private hospitals and health maintenance organizations; school districts (all 1,692 schools in the State will receive kits via the State Education Department); local government agencies; State agencies with local programs; colleges and universities; professional associations; advocacy organizations and individuals; pastoral and faith community; out-of-state; individual requests; and corrections and law enforcement. (Note: This list does not reflect the potential of other State and Local agencies printing and distributing SPEAK kits on their own).

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Beyond the printed word, more than 2,000 individuals have been instructed in person about SPEAK by OMH's Commissioner, Director of Project Management, and Health Promotion and Education staff. Audiences have included: National Council on Suicide Prevention; medical staff at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center; NAMI-NYS; United Way of New York State and New York City; NYSUT Health Educators; MHA-NYC; New York Psychological Association; a statewide Trauma Symposium held in Brooklyn; and visitors to the 2004 New York State Fair in Syracuse. In all, more than 37 SPEAK presentations were held in 2004 and more are planned during 2005. In June 2004, SPEAK was the featured subject of a Benita Zahn televised health program broadcast on Channel 13 (Albany), and additional suicide prevention public service announcements are planned for television and radio that target college students, adolescents, and the elderly.

SPEAK is also available on the OMH Web site in English and Spanish at <http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/speak/> Feature articles on SPEAK have appeared in *Governing* magazine, *Mental Health Weekly* and *Behavioral Healthcare Tomorrow*.

### *Veterans*

State Veterans Counselors routinely meet with and address local senior citizen groups, veterans organizations, civic and fraternal groups to provide information on veterans benefits and services and to make them aware of where and how to obtain help in filing claims for a variety of social, economic and medical benefits.

## **Discussions About Project 2015-Related Issues**

### *Long Term Care Roundtable*

In November, 2004, representatives from the Department of Insurance's Health Bureau participated in a roundtable discussion entitled "Long Term Care in the 21st Century" sponsored by the Government Law Center at Albany Law School. Participants included health care service providers, health care associations, academia, and government. The discussion centered primarily on technological innovations in home care and how such services may be financed. The Bureau continually meets with insurers and their associations to discuss particular issues as they arise such as accuracy of reporting data, improvements in the Healthy New York program, involvement in a study of long term care insurance, etc.

### *Learning Disability Pilots*

The Department of Labor's Welfare-To-Work Division worked with the State University of New York and the New York State Rehabilitation Association to sponsor two symposiums to discuss New York State Department of Labor's Learning Disability Pilots, share experiences of local pilots, and make recommendations for future pilots.

## **Training**

### *Culture-Specific Training Opportunities*

The Office of Mental Health (OMH) is working in collaboration with several

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counties that have local multicultural advisories to improve service quality: the Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee (MAC) of Nassau County has developed a series of culture-specific training opportunities; Suffolk County held an annual cultural competence symposium; Orange County has expanded its training activities to include technical assistance for the development of cultural competence plans for all county human service agencies; Broome County has continued its language interpreter program; and Monroe County continues an extensive cultural competence evaluation, training and plan development process for county agencies.

### *Disability and Accessibility Issues*

The Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (OAPwD) provided training to the members of CSEA's Partnership for Education and Training in June 2004 on topics such as disability and accessibility issues, and assistive technology. OAPwD staff also provided a series of 4 trainings for an employee health benefits company's (MVP Health Care) staff on disability awareness, to a total of 120 customer service employees.

### *STAR Training*

The Office of Real Property Services conducted a statewide training program on exemption administration for local government officials. In addition, courses are provided on an ongoing basis by regional offices on STAR exemption and senior citizen exemptions. Meetings of the Real Property Tax Administration Committee, comprised of local officials, occurred on seven occasions from 2003 through mid-2004, with another meeting

scheduled for December, 2004. Material discussed/covered included the STAR income verification program developed with Dept. of Taxation and Finance, and development of an automated on-line application for the enhanced STAR exemption available to qualifying senior citizens.

### *SUNY Learning Network*

SUNY engages in numerous activities and programs on a regular basis to support the State's changing demographics and diversity needs. Several of the larger programs include campus based programs designed for seniors, access to learning "anywhere-anytime" with the SUNY Learning Network (SLN), Educational Opportunity Centers for workforce training and development, innovative teacher training programs, Educational Opportunity Programs which extend access, and Continuing Education Programs for non-credit activities.

### **Displays at Conferences**

#### *Governor's Expo on Assistive Technology*

In May 2004, OAPwD/TRAID staff coordinated the Governor's Expo on Assistive Technology, a statewide event that featured a wide variety of assistive devices and services for persons of all ages and disabilities. Over 800 persons from around the state participated in this event.

#### *Senior Expos*

The Banking Department participated in the 4th Annual Golden Gathering in Freeport in October 2004 and the Golden

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Gathering in Rockville Center, also in October 2004.

### **Ribbon-Cutting Ceremonies**

#### *Accessible Outdoor Recreation*

On October 30, 2004, Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar was host to the Accessible Outdoor Recreation event in recognition of National Disabilities Awareness Month. A ribbon-cutting re-opened the renovated Woodlot Trail, an accessible boardwalk and stone dust path through a woodlot with a diversity of tree and shrub species. Several vendors and organizations were represented including, Adaptive Sports, International Paper and North Country Cycling. The event included debut of the Upstate Access Network's Access Guide Web site, whose mission is to provide accurate references to area venues that are accessible to people of all abilities. In addition to the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities also participated in this event.

### **Technical Assistance**

#### *Technical Assistance to New York State Area Agencies on Aging – Field Staff Support*

The State Office for the Aging uses field staff to support the Project 2015-related efforts of the area agencies on aging. To help build the capacity of field staff, NYSOFA provided an in-service training for them in August 2004. The training covered current and anticipated demographic changes affecting New York's service delivery system. Specific

information also was provided about several of the issue areas identified in the publication, *Project 2105: Preparing for the Impact of an Aging New York: Articles and Briefs for Discussion* (NYSOFA, 2000). These included: Aging Viet Nam Veterans, Gay and Lesbian Elderly, Mental Illness and Aging, and HIV/AIDS and Older Adults. Discussions were held regarding the implications of these changes for the aging network.

### **Data Support**

The New York State Office for the Aging's (NYSOFA) Project 2015 Web site has selected census data and projections available for use, including selected minority characteristics, living arrangements, housing and marital status, employment characteristics, and characteristics of older women. At the local level, several area agencies on aging involved in Project 2015 activities have requested local data and projections related to dependency ratios, which have been developed by NYSOFA's Policy and Research Team and distributed via an Informational Memorandum to the area agencies on aging.

### **Project 2015 – Related Internships**

#### *SUNY Albany Graduate School of Social Welfare, "Internships on Aging" Project*

As a member of the SUNY Albany "Internships on Aging Project" Advisory Committee, the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) works with SUNY academic staff and fellow committee members to enhance the skills

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of students attending the Graduate School of Social Welfare. During 2004, the agency provided two informational presentations on the OASAS system and improved services for seniors to student interns and the Committee members. In addition, in 2004 OASAS placed a Graduate School intern in the agency's Treatment Division as a member of the "Senior Initiative" staff. The intern has been involved with the design and facilitation of the OASAS statewide "Senior Forums." In addition, the intern is working to identify opportunities to provide practical and collaborative support to existing OASAS and senior service providers in several communities.

### **Outreach**

#### *Environmental Education Outreach and Events*

To service its Project 2015 objectives, the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Division of Public Affairs and Education (DPAE) has increased the diversity of its staffing and presentations at more than 100 outreach programs and activities that serve New York communities and the public. Examples of these activities, which reach an estimated one million New Yorkers each year, include the New York State Fair, county and local fairs, Get Started Fishing Programs, Earth Day, Teacher workshops, water and river festivals and many more public events.

In October, 2004 DEC hosted a Recreation Opportunity Day, which was a special outreach event to the disabled community

at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. The event included exhibits, demonstrations and guided walks specifically geared to disabled participants. Information about accessible campsites, boat launches and fishing piers in the Adirondacks and Catskills was available. Adaptive equipment, including hand cycles and trail wheelchairs, was demonstrated. (some people climbed out of their wheelchairs to try the hand cycles provided by Adaptive Sports and North Country Cycling.) Information about how to create accessible landscaping and outdoor living spaces at home also was available.

#### *Mental Health Outreach*

The Office of Mental Health (OMH) is working to increase its outreach efforts by partnering with groups including the Association of Hispanic Mental Health Professionals, Black Psychiatrists of Greater New York, and the Coalition for Asian American Mental Health. Recognizing that many New Yorkers seek assistance outside of formal mental health settings, OMH has also formed alliances with other systems and programs, including the Peri-Natal Network and Caribbean Cultural Center.

OMH worked to design and implement an effective community outreach, public awareness campaign that is culturally relevant to a wide range of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and spiritual communities that need to be reached to make sure that older individuals and their families become aware of effective treatments and supports, and are motivated to seek help.

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**Encouraging Community-Based Participation**

*Volunteers at Environmental Education Centers*

Community-based participation has been encouraged by DEC at their Environmental Education Centers. In 2004, volunteers guided walks on the Woodlot Trail and the Backyard Trail at the Environmental Education Center in Delmar, New York. Visitors learned about the plants and animals found in a shaded woodlot and how to create a wildlife garden in their own backyards. Trail guides were available in Braille, on audiotape and in large-print format from the Visitor's Center, and sign language interpretation was offered upon request.

**Web Sites**

*Senior Citizens Insurance Resource Center*

The Department of Insurance has added a Senior Citizens Insurance Resource Center to its Web site. The opening paragraph reads:

*"Our Senior Citizens Resource Center provides basic information for New York's senior citizens on health insurance, long term care insurance, Medicare supplement coverage as well as other types of coverage important to seniors. The Senior Citizens Resource Center includes up-to-date information to help seniors evaluate and compare insurance options, costs and companies to get the most from their insurance dollar. Also included are links to other Web sites that provide information to help seniors make the right choices about their insurance needs."*

The address of the Web site is <http://www.ins.state.ny.us/cseniors.htm> and the content includes a wide range of information within the topics of health insurance, long term care, Medicare, Medicaid, general assistance and Social Security. The Web site also has links to other State and Federal Web sites.

*SUNY Web site*

Campus liaisons for Project 2015 have been added to the SUNY Web site: <http://www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/project2015.htm>. A Campus Activities Survey was sent to all SUNY liaisons and identified campus programs will be added to the Web site in 2005. As Project 2015 evolves, the SUNY Web site will be used by the University for exchanging information on Project 2015 activities, conferences, workshops, etc.

**Publications**

*Emergency Management*

The Emergency Management Times is an emergency management newsletter published by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) Community Affairs. This publication is now available on-line via the SEMO Web site [www.nysemo.state.ny.us](http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us). In the Summer 2004 on-line version, there is an article detailing the Human Services Section of SEMO and its efforts to assist special needs 2015-type populations in times of disaster. The link to this publication is <http://nysemo.state.ny.us/PIO/emt/2004/humanservices.htm>.

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The SEMO Community Affairs section also publishes an on-line brochure outlining preparedness entitled Winter Preparedness. The link to this publication is: <http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us/PIO/publicsafety/Winter/>.

*Be Alert, Be Ready, Be Prepared* is another general preparedness brochure published by SEMO Community Affairs which spotlights general preparedness information. The link to this publication is: <http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us/PIO/Publicsafety/BePrepared.pdf>.

## COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES

In response to the question, “What Project 2015-specific collaborations has your agency undertaken, with other state agencies, with local agencies, and/or others?” *twenty-six* of the agencies that responded to the 2004 Status Report survey identified Project 2015-related collaborations that they engaged in during 2004. The breadth and scope of topics, partnerships and innovations, is as varied as the agencies involved in the initiatives that are described. All of the collaborative initiatives are designed and targeted to address priority issue areas included in agencies’ Project 2015 policy briefs. Each of the collaborative initiatives is briefly described below, in alphabetical order by topic.

### *Academic Institutions – Addressing an Aging Population*

Every eight years, the Board of Regents, in collaboration with the higher education community, develops and adopts the Statewide Plan for Higher Education, setting system goals and objectives. The Statewide Plan for Higher Education 2004-2012 is now under development. Regents’ priorities for higher education serve as the foundation for the Plan, which includes the long-range master plans of the State University of New York (SUNY), The City University of New York (CUNY), and New York’s independent and proprietary higher education institutions. One of the Regents priorities in the draft Statewide Plan is a commitment to

ensuring “Qualified Professionals for Every Community throughout the State and Qualified Teachers, Leaders, and Other School Professionals for New York’s Schools.” Information on the draft Plan is available on the Web at [www.highered.nysed.gov/Quality\\_Assurance/home.html](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/Quality_Assurance/home.html)

According to the submission received by SUNY for inclusion in the Regents Statewide Plan, “While campuses update curricula to meet changing demographics, Mission Review II will include focused discussion of campus academic plans and priorities for addressing the State’s aging population, consistent with SUNY’s participation in Project 2015... (I) in particular, it will explore plans for relevant new or expanded programs and to use technology-mediated learning.”

At the State Education Department (SED), with the assistance of professional and cultural associations as well as secondary and higher education institutions, SED has engaged in outreach programs aimed at ethnic populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in professional disciplines. As a first step, all New York State registered professional programs in psychology require all students to take a course in ethnic and cultural diversity. That requirement will be assessed as the Department reviews the remaining registered programs leading to licensure.

### *Adult Immunization*

Local Adult Immunization Coalitions have been set up across the state to develop grassroots efforts in communities to

disseminate information about flu and pneumococcal immunization and to tap into any potential resources. The Department of Health (DOH) Immunization Program and The Pharmacist Society for the State of New York are collaborating to provide flu and pneumococcal shot reminder labels for all New York State pharmacies. The pharmacists will apply these reminder labels on the prescription bottles of their patients over 65 years old and patients receiving drugs for chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

The Immunization Program also worked extensively with the NYSOFA on adult immunization. A Web site was developed with NYSOFA that makes information available to the public on adult immunization in general and the location of flu vaccination clinics in their area.

*Aging Americans – Impacts on Ecology and Environmental Quality*

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and NYSOFA collaborated on the preparation of a presentation for an invitational meeting at the Environmental Protection Agency entitled “Aging Americans: Impacts on Ecology and Environmental Quality.” The presentation included highlights of action steps taken to improve access to DEC’s facilities and programs. Highlights of DEC initiatives to better serve the elderly and people with disabilities include:

DEC’s Adopt a Natural Resource program, which includes volunteer trail construction and maintenance done by several groups,

including elders who are volunteers in many of these groups;

A public-private collaboration has been established as part of the development of International Paper (IP) John Dillon Park in the Town of Long Lake, New York. The park will provide a wilderness opportunity for people with disabilities including camping, hiking, fishing and boating. IP plans to break ground on the construction of IP John Dillon Park soon.

DEC has been working with the DOH’s Healthy Heart Program on the Upstate Access Network’s Access Guide Web site, whose mission is to provide accurate references to area venues that are accessible to people of all abilities.

Another program that DEC is participating in is the Parks and Trails New York, a non-profit membership organization that works to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces throughout the state for all to use and enjoy. They are sharing experience and technical expertise through Parks and Trails New York workshops supported by the NYS DOH.

*Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Among the Elderly*

The issue of alcoholism and substance abuse among the elderly was identified as an important issue early in the Project 2015 process and was articulated in one of the articles included in the *Project 2015: Articles and Briefs for Discussion* publication that was released in 2000. In 2004, the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) submitted a request for Technical Assistance to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

(SAMHSA) to conduct a series of forums across the State to explore the nature and scope of addictive behaviors in the aging population and how such behaviors impact service providers, communities, families and caregivers. SAMHSA approved the request and OASAS enlisted key staff from across their agency to initiate this collaboration with the Federal Government and NYSOFA. Six “Regional Senior Forums” were conducted by OASAS, NYSOFA and federal partners in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, New York City and Long Island between September and December, 2004. OASAS and NYSOFA reached out to colleagues who operate addiction, academic, medical, and geriatric programs to act as hosts for the Forums at venues provided by these local colleagues. Input on potential solutions and priorities will assist New York in developing a strategic action plan. In 2005, OASAS and NYSOFA will collaborate on a second stage of the Forum project to generate a “New York State OASAS Action Plan” to spell out and initiate short, medium and long term goals for the development of improved and increased services for seniors.

*Bank Branches in Underserved Communities in New York State*

The Banking Department has been collaborating with Empire State Development Corporation, the New York City Dept. of Small Business Services, City Planning and the Dept. of Finance on an initiative to promote the Department’s Banking Development District initiative to encourage banks to open branches in underserved communities in New York State.

*Coastal Resources*

The Department of State’s Division of Coastal Resources has undertaken a number of community planning and implementation projects statewide that focus on new and enhanced public access and amenities. All projects are designed to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, which have important implications for sectors of the older population. The Division of Coastal Resources also works with communities through its Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. Many of these projects include enhanced opportunities for passive enjoyment of the waterfront, often a short walk from senior housing complexes. Most of the Division of Coastal Resource efforts require interagency cooperation in particular with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

*Community Health Assessments and the Project 2015 Process – Joint Planning Letter between the New York State Office for the Aging and the Department of Health*

In July 2004, NYSOFA and the Department of Health (DOH) issued a joint letter to local Public Health Departments and Area Agencies on Aging to encourage local collaboration related to Project 2015 and the Community Health Assessment Process, including sharing of data on community needs. Several Area Agencies on Aging have utilized this information to inform and involve local public health

agencies in their Project 2015 and annual implementation plan processes.

### *Consumer Issues*

The Consumer Protection Board (CPB) has expanded the issues they address in their outreach programs and more directly address the concerns of ethnic minority communities. CPB has partnered with the Governor's Citizenship Unit to conduct educational outreach programs within various immigrant communities and further expand our ability to assist non-English speaking consumers.

CPB also has formed a very successful partnership with the Governor's Citizenship Unit and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's (OTDA) Translation Unit to further improve outreach to non-English speaking communities on consumer issues generally, and most recently on Immigration Consultant Fraud. CPB's partnership with the Governor's Citizenship unit has allowed them to reach out to a wide variety of minority communities throughout New York State. CPB and the Governor's Citizenship Unit are also expanding the content of their informational programs to address current consumer concerns of ethnic communities.

The CPB is currently partnering with larger agencies in order to reach a greater population of seniors. One of the effective partnerships the CPB is currently involved in is a joint effort with the New York State Insurance Department to disseminate information to seniors on subjects such as: "How To Purchase Long-Term Care Insurance," "How To Purchase Life

Insurance," and "How To Purchase Health Insurance," all very important issues affecting New York State seniors.

The CPB Chairperson released public service announcements in Spanish regarding Energy Conservation that ran in Latino communities downstate. Also, CPB was directed to lead a coalition of state agencies in educating consumers regarding winter energy issues. This campaign is targeted to all communities statewide.

### *Correctional Facilities and Special Needs Populations*

Most recently, multi-disciplinary teams composed of facility and main office health, program services, security and facility operations staff have developed proposals to implement a Behavioral Health Unit for violent inmates who are mentally ill; an Assisted Living Unit for inmates who, due to their physical condition, cannot function in the general population, and, an Alzheimer's Unit for inmates found to be suffering from this disease. Contingent upon funding, all three units are slated to become operational during the next fiscal year. Specialized units such as these require delicately balancing the needs of the inmate patients with the security needs of the Department of Correctional Services.

### *Emergencies, Disaster Preparedness and Security*

The State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) has completed a planning effort to update the State Emergency Operations Plan. This was a combined effort among several of the state agencies in the Disaster Preparedness Commission. The efforts of

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the Human Services group and Special Needs sheltering sub-group relate directly to SEMO's Project 2015 priority items. The sub-group is comprised of members from the Human Needs Task Force; SEMO, DOH, OTDA, SUNY, SED NYSOFA, Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (OAPwD), Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS), Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), and American Red Cross (ARC).

The group identified needs of special populations in disasters (2015 individuals). Important issues included identification of populations needing shelter in emergencies (elderly, home bound, electricity-dependent, disabled, etc.) and identification and prioritization of appropriate shelters for them. This effort relates to each of the priorities that SEMO set for Project 2015. Communications, alerts and warnings were also addressed as priorities by this group.

The group updated the Human Services portions of the State Emergency Operations Plan. SEMO coordinated this effort and sponsored informational meetings, tabletop exercises and other sessions to discuss and evaluate the plan revisions.

Immediately after the tropical storms of 2004 affected New York State, an outreach was done to identify and meet the needs of seniors at-risk and those needing services. The plan was used and disaster assistance was provided to the population identified as vulnerable. State, local, federal and voluntary agencies have and continue to provide assistance.

The SEMO Human Services Coordinator and members of the task force traveled to Florida to assist victims of the recent hurricanes. They utilized concepts included in our special needs planning initiatives to assist Florida emergency management personnel to more effectively manage special needs issues. Also, based on lessons learned in Florida, the group made some changes to the State plan.

The American Red Cross (ARC) has received a Homeland Security Grant through the Corporation for National and Community Service. Under this grant, SEMO and the ARC have partnered with the state and area agencies on aging and departments of health. Also using grant funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the American Red Cross, in partnership with SEMO, coordinates the Learn and Serve America program. SEMO along with the ARC partners with the State and Area Agencies on Aging, the Red Cross and the Department of Health in New York State and in Pennsylvania. This program targets 12 specific school districts by preparing youth and training them to conduct programs for seniors' special needs populations about emergency preparedness. One unique aspect of this program is that the activities are intergenerational -- seniors and youth work together to build emergency preparedness kits. An additional program teaches high school students to develop computer mapping tools used in disasters to identify at-risk individuals needing services. This includes the elderly and special needs populations.

Extreme Weather Plan -- The SEMO Human Services Branch is in the process of coordinating a multi-agency planning effort to revise the Extreme Weather Plan. This planning effort will examine and determine the best methods to reach and inform the elderly population of services during emergencies. SEMO is working closely with the DOH, who is lead in this project. This will also promote county-based registries for at-risk individuals.

#### *Environmental Remediation*

The Department of Environmental Conservation initiated the formation of a Brownfield Interagency Work Group, whose mission is to exchange information on brownfield-related activities and to develop a coordinated agenda for addressing brownfield revitalization in New York State. Transforming brownfield properties into productive community assets involves many factors: planning, financing, community involvement, liability issues, technology selection, regulatory requirements and the coordination of stakeholders. New York State agencies have a wide range of brownfield stakeholders with diverse backgrounds and expertise. The Group is made up of fifteen state government agencies, which have met approximately once a month since April, 2004 to further its mission.

#### *Family Type Homes – Quality of Life Issues*

The Office of Children and Family Services, Bureau of Adult Services and the New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman have established a

collaboration to assist with quality of life issues for residents of Family Type Homes. The directors of the programs have a regular schedule of meetings to share information, trainings and concerns.

#### *Gambling and Tobacco Use*

OASAS has increased their involvement and response to the toll of tobacco use and gambling, with special consideration being given to the health and social risks faced by seniors. OASAS is collaborating with a variety of professional entities to include tobacco and gambling-related issues in its existing education, prevention, intervention and treatment services.

#### *Governor's Task Force for Housing People with Special Needs*

The New York State Banking Department, as an active participant in the Governor's Task Force for Housing People with Special Needs, has taken a number of steps that will help bolster supportive housing for the aging with special needs, and other special needs groups.

The Banking Department has cooperated with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, and non-profit organizations such as Common Ground Community and the Supportive Housing Network of New York, on Supportive Housing events and efforts to enhance bank involvement in supportive housing.

#### *Housing People with Special Needs*

DHCR is chairing an internal Interagency Task Force on Housing for People with Special Needs. The Task Force was

created in October of 2003 by Governor Pataki and charged with the responsibility of cooperatively exploring and advising the Governor concerning opportunities for financing, establishing increased availability of housing and support services for individuals to live with independence and dignity in the community of their choice.

Several speakers were invited to offer presentations at the Task Force meetings in an effort to raise awareness about specific issues and offer suggestions on how government agencies, community based organizations and the private sector could partner to further our collective goals. The Superintendent of the New York State Banking Department issued an Industry Letter to the Community Reinvestment Act Officers of New York's banking institutions requesting that they consider financing housing that is linked with targeted services for special needs populations. A copy of the Superintendent's letter is available on the Banking Department's Web site at [www.banking.state.ny.us](http://www.banking.state.ny.us).

The New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and Center for Independence of the Disabled (CIDNY) gave a presentation to the Task Force on a new on-line Statewide Housing Registry for Persons with Disabilities, which will provide information on accessible, adaptable and fully adapted housing units. CIDNY expects to test market the system in fall-winter 2004. The housing registry is also expected to be coordinated with DHCR's Affordable Housing Directory which can identify accessible, adaptable and fully

adapted housing units and has plans to allow users to search the site for these criteria. Task Force members were asked to explore ways to improve their Web sites and capitalize on DDPC and CIDNY's efforts for making the new directory as useful as possible to the public.

In 2005, the Interagency Task Force on Housing for People with Special Needs is continuing its collaborative effort to explore and advise the Governor concerning opportunities for financing, as well as establishing increased availability of housing and support services for individuals to live with independence and dignity in the community of their choice.

#### *Long Term Care Insurance Education*

As a result of recent long term care initiative legislation, the Insurance Department will be consulting with the Department of Health and NYSOFA to establish a long term care insurance education and outreach program to inform and educate the general public about long term care insurance, including policies available through the New York State Partnership for Long Term Care Program.

#### *Long Term Care – Point of Entry (POE)*

The New York State Office for the Aging and the Department of Health continue to collaborate to identify action steps that will be necessary to implement the POE program in New York State. NYSOFA is committed to continue development of the program in a manner that is responsive to the interests and needs of stakeholders and will build opportunities for input into the roll-out of the program. While DOH and

NYSOFA have been partners to date, as design moves more towards implementation, additional state agencies, departments and other stakeholders will likely be more involved with the program.

### *Mental Health*

In 2005, OMH will establish a planning committee in collaboration with the Milbank Memorial Fund and the Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York to develop public policy recommendations related to the improvement of the care and treatment of older adults with co-morbid health and mental health conditions. This project would bring together leaders from the Executive and Legislative branches of New York State government, and leaders in the fields of geriatric mental health, medicine and long-term care. The purpose of such collaboration is to: identify practical strategies for addressing the fundamental fact of co-morbidity; propose related policy changes in New York State; and develop an action plan to implement such changes.

### *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*

Under the New York State “Options for People Through Services” (OPTS) program, OMRDD is entertaining innovative proposals to enhance the lives of the people they serve, including aging consumers. They have received numerous proposals, specifically directed to improving services for older people and their caregivers. The proposals explore a variety of service approaches, including building greater health supports into residential programs, day service

“retirement” options and supports for aging caregivers. OMRDD is partnering with their not-for-profit agencies in moving forward with this initiative. NYS-OPTS is allowing their service system to address the special needs of an aging population. Through OPTS they are offering a wide range of innovative community-based services and supports.

### *Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council*

Governor George E. Pataki announced the establishment of the Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council to explore and recommend ways to ensure New Yorkers with disabilities receive services in the most integrated settings appropriate to their individual needs. The Council’s actions will be guided by the principles set forth under the Olmstead Decision to empower individuals with disabilities to live more independently.

NYS Agency Council Members are the Office of Mental Health, Department of Health, State Office for the Aging, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Education Department, Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Department of Transportation, Office of Children and Family Services, Office of the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities, and the Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled.

### *New York State 50PLUS: Well-Being Data Resource*

The Council on Children and Families (CCF) and the New York State Office for

the Aging (NYSOFA) are partnering to develop a conceptual framework that depicts well-being of adults age 50 and older in New York State and to develop a dataset of indicators that reflects that well-being. This comprehensive data resource will be drawn from multiple sources that will be used to thoroughly portray the status, circumstances and condition of adults age 50 and older across New York.

The conceptual framework for the data resource defines older adult well-being through six interdependent quality of life domains, similar to the domains used to describe child well-being in New York State Touchstones. The domains, drawn from a comprehensive review of the current research literature input from national experts, and development work by state agency partners, include the following areas:

- Family Roles;
- Community Roles/Community Living;
- Workforce Roles;
- Financial Independence;
- Physical and Emotional Health;
- Community Quality.

The approach is intended to describe the complex characteristics involved in successful aging and the need to use an integrated approach when addressing issues pertinent to older adults and their families.

#### *Problem Gambling Among the Elderly*

The rise of the incidence of problem gambling among the elderly has been identified by the New York Council on Problem Gambling, Inc. The Council on Problem Gambling, OASAS and NYSOFA

have begun working together to disseminate information about the problem to counties, caregivers, and senior citizen groups. The information being disseminated has included material about the availability of the Council's 24 hour helpline.

#### *Public Utilities - Information*

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is working with NYSOFA, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Consumer Protection Board, and a wide variety of county, regional, and local governments and agencies to help inform and educate New York's senior and non-English speaking population. PSC produces most of their publications in Spanish as well as English and works with New York City's Spanish language radio to increase awareness and understanding of utility issues for the Hispanic community. During 2005 PSC plans to expand the number of languages that they print publications in and look for ways to address the concerns and interests of non-English speaking and non-Spanish speaking communities. During 2005 PSC plans to partner with AARP to help ensure that their members' utility needs and concerns are met.

#### *Transition from Nursing Home to Community Living*

The Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) Independent Living Centers has partnered with the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), DOH and NYSOFA to establish six demonstration projects aimed at assisting identified residents of skilled nursing

facilities to transition back to community living.

The projects successfully assisted over 60 individuals to leave skilled nursing facilities and identified a range of barriers and best practices in facilitating nursing home transition. These projects are being sustained by DDPC funding for a second year.

VESID's network of Independent Living Centers collaborated with nearly 30 disability and senior service organizations through the Coalition to Implement Olmstead in New York to educate the community and legislators on the benefit of a new Medicaid waiver aimed at nursing home transition and diversion. The Coalition provided leadership and testimony to legislators, which led to the passage of a bill to establish such a waiver in both the Assembly and Senate.

### *Workforce*

The Department of Civil Service collaborates with all State agencies and local governments on issues related to the workforce. While not necessarily labeled as a Project 2015 endeavor, these collaborations are conducted with the intent of addressing the same issues identified in Project 2015. The mission of the Department is to provide a qualified, well-trained workforce for the State government and the issues identified in their Project 2015 document will have a profound impact on that mission. Project 2015, with its information on the State's population and customer base, has proven very helpful to the Department of Civil Service in augmenting knowledge of demographic and workplace issues.

In 2003-04, members of the Board of Regents and State Education Department (SED) staff advocated for a Regents priority legislative proposal that would eliminate the current disincentive for retired public employees to work as teachers and educational leaders [www.oms.nysed.gov/legcoord/](http://www.oms.nysed.gov/legcoord/).

The Regents are again considering including this proposal among the 2004-05 Regents priority legislative proposals. The Board of Regents and SED have worked closely with local educators in the Big Five school districts to convene five "Call to Teaching" forums. The forums were designed to communicate with educators about the need and initiatives necessary to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified teachers for all schools. They also provided an opportunity to talk directly with over 1,600 high school students and students in teacher education programs about the teaching profession. The forums resulted in strong linkages across the K-12 and higher education communities and energized educators and students.

To address the shortage of math teachers, the State Education Department, the New York City Department of Education and four colleges in the New York City Metropolitan Area collaborated to develop a Math Immersion Program within the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. Qualified college graduates with math-related experience are placed in math teaching assignments. During a summer introductory program, participants were provided intensive preparation in mathematics and pedagogy. All Teaching Fellows are required to pass the Math Content Specialty Test (CST) before

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entering the classroom. The program is proving to be an effective pathway for preparing teachers in a critical shortage area.

Across the State, SED staff continue to collaborate with other Workforce New York System agencies to meet the expanded need for trained direct care workers. During 2004 at least three job fairs were held specifically targeted to health care. In addition, health care worker recruitments are held on a regular and continuing basis in many local offices.

The Workforce Development and Training Division (WD&T) oversees the implementation of the One-Stop Career Centers, which by definition requires participation/collaboration of a multitude of mandated and non-mandated partners. In addition, WD&T works closely with Department of Economic Development, State Education Department, Office of Children and Family Services, Department of Health and other state and local partners to address New York's current and future workforce needs.

SUNY System Administration, Office of Academic Affairs, the NYS Office for the Aging, the State University College at Buffalo and the Center for Health Workforce Studies, School of Public Health, University at Albany are collaborating on a conference as part of SUNY Conversations in the Disciplines to be held on April 5th, 2005. The conference entitled, "Project 2015: Impact of Aging in Higher Education – Future Long Term Care Work Force Needs" intends to bring together SUNY faculty and visiting scholars to discuss how

specific disciplines creatively infuse content regarding long-term care into undergraduate and graduate education. Many new programs are interdisciplinary, reflecting converging areas of academic interest as well as requirements of the workplace. SUNY System Administration will participate in the publication of the conference proceedings.

SUNY is already an active participant in workforce development efforts within New York State, working with public and private organizations to meet the education and training needs for the current workforce. Individual SUNY campuses sponsor career development programs which seek to match job market needs with appropriate graduates. SUNY is interested in determining the future workforce needs from the various state agencies participating in Project 2015. This information will assist SUNY campuses in their career development education and training activities. State agencies will mutually benefit from a labor market prepared with the necessary job skills and knowledge to be effective in an older, more diverse workforce.

SUNY is interested in collaborations with other state agencies on a career development Web site that would be able to match local NYS job market needs with SUNY graduates.

#### *Veterans*

The Division of Veterans' Affairs, in collaboration with the VA and the New York State Office for Temporary Disability Assistance, initiated a program to identify veterans and dependents of

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veterans receiving any form of public assistance (including Medicaid food stamps, safety net programs, temporary assistance and Home Energy Assistance Program) and to make them aware of federal, state and local veterans benefits that could assist them and possibly improve their quality of life. In March 2004 a direct mailing was sent to more than 42,000 families statewide -- many of them senior citizens -- advising them of

medical programs and veterans benefits that might provide help and improve their quality of life.

The project will be followed up with pilot programs in several communities, where direct outreach through telephone contact will be made to those on public assistance. The personal contacts will provide more information about veterans programs and services and inquire why, if any reason, the individual has not utilized VA health care services.

## Project 2015 Publications

***Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State – A Tool Kit for Community Action*** (2003, New York State Office for the Aging, 2003).

The Project 2015 Tool Kit is a compendium of materials developed through a partnership of the New York State Office for the Aging, New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the New York State Coalition for the Aging, as part of the continuing commitment to plan for the impact of our State's changing demographic profile. The Tool Kit provides local conveners – the State's 59 Area Agencies on Aging – with the materials and the ability to engage community stakeholders in preparing for the impact of our changing demographics on communities across the state.

***Project 2015: Guide to New York State Government's Planning Initiative*** (2003, New York State Office for the Aging, 2003).

Documented in a joint effort by the New York State Office for the Aging and the University at Albany's Center for Excellence in Aging Services, the *Guide* describes the Project 2015 strategic planning process and identifies the core elements of success in this initiative. It provides information about the overall design, management, and implementation of Project 2015, and can be used by government and community leaders who are seeking to engage in a multi-agency or community-wide planning process to develop action steps around a common issue.

***Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York: White Paper for Discussion*** (2002, New York State Office for the Aging; on the Web at <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/explore/project2015/index.htm>).

The Project 2015 White Paper includes a compendium of Briefs developed by each of the 36 participating state government agencies in the strategic planning process that was launched in 2002. The publication also includes introductory articles about the changing face of New York – the people and the numbers, and an analysis and summary of the 36 state agency policy briefs. The publication provides both a basis from which individual state agencies are continuing to take concrete actions and a practical framework for New York State to prepare for the future impact of population change.

***Project 2015: Population Characteristics by County*** (2002, New York State Office for the Aging; on the Web at <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/explore/project2015/index.htm>).

Developed by Empire State Development's State Data Center and published by the State Office for the Aging as a companion document to *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York: White Paper for Discussion*. It provides population projections for New York State (all ages) based on the 2000 Census.

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***Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State: Articles and Briefs for Discussion*** (2000, reprinted 2002, New York State Office for the Aging; on the Web at <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/explore/project2015/index.htm>).

This publication was produced as a joint effort by the State Society on Aging of New York and the New York State Office for the Aging. This publication, written by researchers, service providers, policy analysts, and other professionals with expertise in the field of aging, includes 24 articles and briefs on the future of a variety of aging issues.

***Demographic Projections to 2025*** (1999, reprinted 2002 New York State Office for the Aging; on the Web at <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/explore/project2015/index.htm>).

Developed by the New York State Office for the Aging as a companion document to *Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State: Articles and Briefs for Discussion*, it provides aging-related population projections for New York State based on the 1990 Census.