



NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA ALLIANCE ON AGING

Published to Provide Information on Issues Affecting Older Oklahomans

Ken Jones, President

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President's Message: Perspective

I was in a car wreck. It was my fault. I failed to yield. The other driver signaled a right-hand turn but kept going straight. By the time I discovered my mistake in interpreting her signal, it was too late. I found myself in her lane. She was unable to swerve to miss me. My misperception turned into a brutal reality.

Watching what the legislature does can sometimes be very confusing. They listen to many voices talking to them. Each has a different perspective. The legislators make their decisions based on their own perspectives. And sometimes their perceptions turn into a brutal reality for seniors in long-term care via unintended consequences.

I can think of no better example of this than when legislators were considering the sunset bill (HB2824) for the Board of Examiners for Long-Term Care Administrators (OSBELTCA). Language in the bill has been set to decimate the role of OSBELTCA, not to simply extend the sunset.

The one saving grace in my car wreck was that I carried excellent insurance. If legislators make the wrong turn on this bill, it will be like driving without insurance. While OSBELTCA may be misunderstood, it is certainly underappreciated.

We cannot necessarily understand why each legislator votes the way they do. But we can relay to them the upcoming damages it will cause. I hope we can change their perspective before we all see the brutal reality that follows.

State Capitol Update by Esther Houser

Please ask your Senator to **preserve the existing** Board of Examiners for Long-Term Care Administrators (OSBELTCA) and extend its Sunset Date. **OBELTCA is rated among the TOP 5 Long-Term Care Administrator Licensing Boards** in the entire country!!

House Bill 2824 destroys OSBELTCA and turns it into an Advisory Committee to the Commissioner of Health! It passed the House and will soon be heard in the Senate.

The Oklahoma Alliance on Aging, the State Council on Aging, and the Oklahoma Silver-Haired Legislature Alumni Association are all **opposed** to the proposed evisceration of this highly functioning State Licensing Board for LTC Administrators. The Administrators who are licensed by this Board

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manage the day-to-day operations of every Nursing Home, Assisted Living Facility, Residential Care Home, and Adult Day Center in Oklahoma.

The State Legislature needs to protect the Older Oklahomans who live in these facilities, not respond to a very small number of facility owners who wish to decrease standards and diminish this licensing Board's effectiveness.

In 2009, Nursing Home Administrator applicants had a less than 18% first-time pass rate on the national exams (less than 1 in 5 passed). Those pass rates flipped to about 80% after the Board of Examiners for LTC Administrators (OSBELTCA) hired its current director and changed the training regimen.

Numerous barriers to entering this profession exist primarily due to the lack of a common standard between states. The differences in Administrator-in-Training (AIT) training regimens/requirements between states were a major barrier in most states. **NAB** (the National Association of Long-Term Care Administrators Boards), which represents 52 jurisdictions nationally, and **ACHCA** (the American College of Health Care Administrators) formed a joint task force to create national AIT Training programs acceptable to all states.

Oklahoma's current OSBELTCA DIRECTOR and BOARD developed the AIT program selected as the "turnkey" program and became "the" national training program. This is an example of the true commitment and initiative that Oklahoma's current Board of Examiners for LTC Administrators and its director have shown, and which should be rewarded instead of demolished!

Post-pandemic, most states are reporting an "exodus" of administrators from the profession. OSBELTCA is reporting its highest renewal rates in the last 4 years over more than the last 12 years. *This is what "Top Five" agencies do - they produce results when others are struggling (in the same environment), because they're doing things differently and better. Processes have been streamlined and barriers to entry have been removed.*

Director Thomas has served at the national level, chairing committees, and was elected to serve as the Chair of the National Association of Long-Term Care Administrators (currently through June 2024). He has brought great respect around the nation to Oklahoma's training programs.

The current AU ("Administrators University") class has Administrators-in-Training (AITs) from Dallas and Kansas City traveling to Oklahoma just to get OSBELTCA's training. It is that good and that well-known and respected nationally now. It is a 17-week course to prepare prospective nursing home administrators for their State and National qualifying exams.

Please contact your Senator and ask them to maintain OSBELTCA in its current form and simply extend its Sunset date in HB2824.

Senior Day at the Capitol

What a great turnout for Senior Day at the Capitol 2023!! This was our first in-person Senior Day since 2019, so Thank You to all the folks who made it to the "new" (newly renovated and reopened) Oklahoma State Capitol on February 27th. Well over 300 people were in attendance, with representation from all over the State!

Attendees filled the House Chamber and Galleries to hear the Welcome by the **Speaker of the House of Representatives Charles McCall** and the **Oklahoma Senior Day Proclamation** read by our **Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell**. They were preceded by the **presentation of the Colors by the Chickasaw Nation Honor Guard** and the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

Our lovely and lively Emcee was **Rebekah Williams, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Systems Advocate from the SODA Area Agency on Aging in Durant**. Thank you, especially to **Rebekah for her energy and for her unquenchable commitment to the well-being of all Older Oklahomans!**

Other speakers that day included **Representative Marilyn Stark**, Vice-Chair of the House Health Services and LTC Committee, **Representative Nicole Miller**, and **Representative Mickey Dollens**.

The new **Department of Human Services Director, "Dr. Deb" Shropshire** spoke and also came to learn from the attendees, which was a great thing to hear and observe.

AARP Oklahoma's State Director Sean Voskuhl presented information on several bills of interest and concern that are currently moving through the legislative process. And **Community Advocate Ruth Rolfe** gave a rousing message highlighting the importance of EVERY ONE OF US speaking up on the issues that are important to us!

We can't say enough about the excellent representation of a multitude of State Programs and Services by our Exhibitors! The range of services they represented was impressive --- everything from assistance with Vision and Hearing loss from programs of the Department of Rehabilitative Services to Medicare Assistance from the Oklahoma Insurance Department. Fraud and Scam Prevention help from TRIAD and the Oklahoma Securities Department as well as new opportunities to stay healthy through the Oklahoma Senior Games and the Oklahoma Healthy Brain Initiative were also available. The Oklahoma Association of Area Agencies on Aging was there, with lots of information about their familiar and not-so-familiar local services for Older Oklahomans, and DHS CAP (Aging) provided information about Caregiver Respite, ADvantage Waiver, LTC Ombudsman help, and other programs that are available statewide.

A very special thank you to our Sponsors and Planning Committee! **AARP Oklahoma** was our first **Gold Sponsor** for this year and gave great support to the event in several ways. The **Chickasaw Nation** was also a **Gold Sponsor** and contributed financially as well as providing **their Honor Guard** and tabling

at Senior Day. And the **Oklahoma Senior Journal** provided free publicity and hosted our Emcee Rebekah Williams and Dr. Germaine Odenheimer on their broadcast.

Silver Sponsors included: Healthy Aging OKC, which donated hours of volunteer time and arranged for the **donations of Coffee from Scooters Coffee** and healthy **snacks from the Bank of Oklahoma (BOK)**. **Other Silver Sponsors** included the **Oklahoma Alliance on Aging**, and the **Oklahoma Home Care and Hospice Association**.

Thank you to our WONDERFUL Planning Committee and everyone else who made the day such a great one! Here's hoping that next year we can repeat and even expand upon this year's successes!

Senior LIFEstyle & Wellness Expo by Carol Carter

The Senior LIFEstyle & Wellness Expo is returning to the Exchange Center at Tulsa's Expo Square on **Tuesday, July 11, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.** The free event is presented by LIFE Senior Services and presenting sponsors AARP Oklahoma, Oklahoma Insurance Department, VIP Care, Oklahoma Senior Law and New On 6.

Now in its sixth year, the expo has grown to become the largest senior event in Oklahoma with between 1,500 and 2,200 people attending each year. Focusing on active aging, health and wellness, and retirement lifestyles and interests, it also attracts more than 150 exhibitors representing financial and legal resources, Medicare and other insurance providers, transportation services, nonprofits serving older adults, volunteer opportunities, senior living, assistive technology, home and community-based medical services, and dental and vision services, among others.

Additional attractions include a free shredding event between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Rx Take Back booth which safely disposes of expired or unwanted medications; free vision, hearing, blood pressure, and glucose screenings; rescue pets for adoption and free event bags for the first 500 people through the door.

News On 6 anchor Lori Fullbright will emcee the Senior Stage and give her eye-opening "Cons, Frauds and Scams" presentation. Other Senior Stage highlights include a cooking segment by Chefs for Seniors; the Assistance League Fashion Show, and the Antiques Sideshow with appraiser Rocky Randolph. The popular "Seek, Find, WIN!" scavenger hunt game is also back offering winners one of ten \$100 Reasor's gift cards, compliments of Memorial Park.

For more information about the event or exhibitor packages, please contact Carol Carter at 918-664-9000, ext. 1219.



Join the Alliance

Together we make a difference! The Oklahoma Alliance on Aging, a 501(c) (3), is a statewide non-partisan coalition. The Mission of the Alliance is to identify the needs of aging Oklahomans, educate them on issues, and advocate for solutions.

As a member, YOU stay informed on issues about aging Oklahomans. YOU receive a quarterly newsletter, participate in an annual survey on issues, and have an opportunity to attend Education and Strategy committee meetings. In addition, the Alliance gives YOU a voice in identifying and prioritizing concerns and problems while monitoring legislation.

Membership Application: (check one or more)

(Contributions above basic dues are **tax-deductible** to the extent allowed by law.)

- | | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> New | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |
| Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (Over \$25) |
| Organizational | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (Over \$100) |
| Sponsors | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 or more | |
| Donation | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ (any amount is appreciated!) | |
| Endowment Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ (any amount is appreciated!) | |

Please designate a representative to attend meetings and receive mailings.

Names: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please let us know if you would like to:

Volunteer

(Area of interest) _____

Work on a committee

(Area of interest)

Sponsorship Application: (check one)

- \$200 Newsletter \$50 full-page \$30 half page

Help the Alliance by sponsoring the newsletter or finding an organization or business. By becoming a sponsor, you:

- Ensure distribution of the newsletter across the state
- Are recognized in the newsletter edition you sponsor (your name or your organization's name, whichever you prefer)

Contact the Alliance office for details! Call 405-943-1895.

MAIL TO: P.O. Box 12008, OKC, OK 73157



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www.okallianceonaging.org

Email: Marietta.OAOA@gmail.com

Call: (405) 943-1895

Hours: M, W, and F from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

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2023 CALENDAR

Mark the Dates

Meetings, 3rd Tuesday of the Quarterly month.

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

June 20, 2023---May meet in-person.

Location will be emailed at a later date.

September 19, 2023

December 19, 2023

Location:

ZOOM link emailed one week before the meeting. If you don't receive one, contact Marietta.oaoa@gmail.com for any questions.

If you are not a member, please join.