



PROJECT 2020

**Building on the Promise of Home
and Community-Based Services**



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NASUA and n4a Applaud the Introduction of Project 2020 Legislation and Urge Its Swift Passage As Part of Health Care Reform

WASHINGTON, DC – Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), and Representatives Bruce L. Braley (D-IA) and John Sarbanes (D-MD) introduced *Project 2020: Building on the Promise of Home and Community-Based Services* in their respective chambers late last night and this afternoon.

The legislation, developed in a partnership between two leading national aging organizations—National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) and National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)—provides the first coordinated national long-term care strategy that will generate savings in Medicaid and Medicare at the federal and state levels. At the same time, *Project 2020* will enable older adults to get the support they need to successfully age where they want to—in their own homes and communities.

As Congress works to address reforming the nation's health care system, NASUA and n4a are optimistic *Project 2020* will be included as a first step forward in making long-term care services and supports more available to older Americans and persons with disabilities of any age.

Project 2020 is estimated to reach over 41 million Americans and will reduce federal Medicaid and Medicare costs by approximately \$2.8 billion over the first five years, resulting in a net savings to the federal government of nearly \$250 million. The program would also generate significant savings for state governments. Financial performance is expected to improve in years five through 10 of the program, as all systems reach full scale operations nationally, with the net federal savings over 10 years reaching \$1.1 billion.

Project 2020 builds on best practices in community-based long-term care that have been demonstrated to reduce the need for more expensive institutional care and prevent or at least delay "spend down" to Medicaid for elderly and disabled adults. The legislation embraces three proven strategies as requirements for infrastructure development and participation in this program. The key elements of the approach include:

1. Person-Centered Access to Information: Services would be made available to help anyone interested in accessing long-term care obtain counseling and assistance regarding long-term care services and supports.
2. Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: Scientifically-proven wellness programs for seniors would be provided through Area Agencies on Aging.
3. Enhanced Nursing Home Diversion Services: Specific care plans targeted at allowing lower-income individuals to stay in the community and stay off Medicaid.

“The Aging Services Network has demonstrated that we are the right infrastructure at the right time to provide these services in every community across the nation at a lower cost to consumers and to the Medicaid and Medicare programs,” said Lynn Kellogg, President of n4a.

“We applaud the joint efforts of our partners in the Senate and House and thank them for recognizing that the need for reform in this arena is great,” said Irene Collins, incoming President of NASUA.

“Project 2020 is especially important now during this time of economic crisis,” said Patricia A. Polansky, President of NASUA.

In 2008, more than 52 million Americans were over the age of 60 and by 2020 one in six Americans will be age 65 and older. The fastest growing segment of the aging population is individuals over the age of 85—often the most vulnerable older adults needing long-term care services and supports, and whose numbers are expected to double by 2020. These trends make the United States’ current strategy on financing long-term care costs through Medicaid and Medicare unsustainable. *Project 2020* provides the nation’s rapidly increasing aging population, as well as persons with disabilities, with enhanced home and community-based support services while at the same time saving Medicaid and Medicare dollars.

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National Association of State Units on Aging, founded in 1964, represents the nation’s 56 officially designated state and territorial agencies on aging. The Association’s principal mission is to support visionary state leadership, advance state systems innovation and articulate a national policy on home and community based services for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) is the membership organization for the 629 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and more than 244 Title VI Native American aging programs in the U.S. The fundamental mission of the AAAs and Title VI programs is to provide services that make it possible for older individuals to remain in their homes, thereby preserving their independence and dignity. These agencies coordinate and support a wide range of home and community-based services, including information and referral, home-delivered and congregate meals, transportation, employment services, senior centers, adult day care and a long-term care ombudsman program. For more information, go to <http://www.n4a.org/>.