

Office of Performance Evaluations

News Release: Coordination and Delivery of Senior Services in Idaho

February 7, 2011

(BOISE) Seniors are becoming a larger segment of Idaho's population (anticipated to grow by 147 percent over the next 20 years), and the successful delivery of future senior services hinges on a statewide collaborative approach among the Idaho Commission on Aging, six area agencies on aging (AAAs), and local providers, according to a report released today by the Legislature's independent, nonpartisan evaluation office.

Evaluators found that the number of reimbursed units for certain senior services has declined in Idaho. Over the last five years, nutrition services, which include congregate and home-delivered meals, declined 15% statewide. Transportation services have recently declined, falling 64% statewide from 2008 to 2009. The report recommends that the commission work with the AAAs to more closely examine the reasons for these declines and coordinate with senior centers to identify ways to increase center participation and keep centers relevant to younger seniors.

Evaluators found a wide variation in the amounts reimbursed to service providers statewide, reflecting local control and flexibility as intended under the federal Older Americans Act. For example, reimbursement rates for home-delivered meals ranged from \$1.60 to \$6.00 and congregate meals ranged from \$1.10 to \$4.80.

Despite improvements to how data is maintained and reported, the study found inconsistencies in the data that is maintained by the commission and reported to the US Administration on Aging. The report makes recommendations to improve data management and contract oversight, and to provide the AAAs with more flexibility in how they use state funds. The report also recommends that the commission expand its performance measures and include more comprehensive information on the number and types of services provided throughout the state to better reflect the outcomes of successful delivery efforts.

In his response to the study, the Governor stated that "the analysis will provide valuable assistance to the Commission in its future planning efforts."

The report contains formal responses from the Governor, the Idaho Commission on Aging, and the directors of the area agencies on aging.

The eight-member Joint Legislative Oversight Committee is equally divided between the two political parties and the two chambers of the Legislature. At the end of the 2010 legislative session, the committee voted to direct the nonpartisan Office of Performance Evaluations to conduct this study by examining the current structure of senior services in Idaho, specifically for nutrition and transportation services. Senator Elliot Werk and Representative Clifford Bayer co-chair the committee.