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**AAA sets Annual Legislative Forum, Annual Implementation Plan Public Hearing**

ST. JOSEPH — The community is invited to meet with state elected officials at the 17th annual tri-county Legislative Forum on **Monday, April 22 hosted by Region IV Area Agency on Aging (AAA).**

**The forum is set for 2-3:30 p.m. at the Campus for Creative Aging,** 2920 Lakeview Ave., St. Joseph.

The event will provide an opportunity for seniors, caregivers, people with disabilities and professionals working in the field of aging to engage in a dialog with state legislators around a platform of issues key to people’s ability to age with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities.

“Decisions made in Lansing have a direct and far-reaching impact on the quality of life for seniors in Michigan. This event brings together seniors, caregivers and advocates from Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties to meet with their state representatives, senators and public policy staff to discuss critical issues facing seniors in Southwest Michigan,” says Christine Vanlandingham, chief executive officer for AAA. “The advocates will urge legislators to take action and ensure adequate funding in the FY2025 budget for critical supports and services older adults need to stay independent in their homes.”

In addition, the event will serve as a public hearing for AAA’s Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). The plan indicates how federal Older Americans Act and state Older Michiganians Act funds will be spent to support services for older adults in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties for the period Oct. 1, 2024, through Sept. 30, 2025.

A summary of the AIP will be made available by April 8 at [www.AreaAgencyonAging.org](http://www.AreaAgencyonAging.org) or can be requested by calling 269-985-0109. Written comments may be submitted by letter to 2900 Lakeview Ave., St. Joseph, MI, 49085, or e-mailed to info@areaagencyonaging.org by May 8.

This event also acts as a kickoff to Older Americans Month in May, Older Michiganians Day on May 1 and Senior Action Week in Michigan, April 29-May 3.

During Senior Action Week, AAA will feature policy topics daily on its [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RegionIVAAA) page aimed to raise statewide awareness around these priorities of importance for area seniors.

In addition, residents may tune in to the Older Michiganians Day Livestream at 11 a.m. May 1 from the lawn of the Michigan Capitol Building where advocates from around the state will come together to rally around these policy priorities. A watch-party will be held at the Campus for Creative Aging.

Set to attend the Forum on April 22 are Representatives Joey Andrews (D-District 38) and Brad Paquette (R-District 37), and Senator Jonathon Lindsey (R-District 17). Legislative staff for Representative Pauline Wendzel (R-District 39) and Senator Aric Nesbitt (R-District 20) are also scheduled to attend.

Requests for accessibility accommodations such as language translation, sign language interpretation, assistive listening devices, or transportation services can be made by contacting Area Agency on Aging prior to the event.

For more information, visit [www.areaagencyonaging.org](http://www.areaagencyonaging.org).

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About Region IV Area Agency on Aging

Region IV Area Agency on Aging celebrates 50 years of serving older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers in 2024. RIV AAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation. Established in 1974 for the business of developing age supportive commerce and services, it plays a major role in planning, funding, and delivery of a host of services. Empowerment and independence of community members are driving themes behind its efforts. Designated by the State of Michigan to receive federal Older Americans Act funds for planning and development, the agency manages an array of government contracts for service delivery in southwest Michigan. Its primary service area includes Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. For more information about the RIVAAA, visit www.areaagencyonaging.org.