



For Immediate Release: April 20, 2021

**CONTACT:**

Christine Vanlandingham  
269-983-0177 (voice)  
cvanlandingham@areaagencyonaging.org

**Protecting and Expanding Services for Seniors Takes Center Stage at Policy Event**

St. Joseph, MI-Seniors, caregivers and other people interested in senior issues are invited to meet with state elected officials on Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. during the 14<sup>th</sup> annual tri-county Legislative Forum on Senior Issues hosted by Region IV Area Agency on Aging as a part of Senior Action Week 2021.

The virtual event provides 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.

The five advocacy priorities for Senior Action Week include: rebalancing Medicaid-funded Long-Term Services & Supports (LTSS) to allow older adults to receive services in their own homes and communities instead of in an institutional setting; increasing access to non-Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services; bridging the digital divide for older adults; supporting and strengthening the direct care workforce; and the establishment of Kinship Caregiver Program.

"This event brings together seniors, caregivers and advocates from Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties to meet with their state representatives and senators to discuss critical issues facing seniors in southwest Michigan," says Christine Vanlandingham, Chief Operating Officer for the Region IV Area Agency on Aging. "With the pandemic still ongoing, we continue to face challenges that continue to increase the vulnerability of older adults and impact families. The advocates will urge legislators to take action and ensure adequate funding in the FY2022 budget for critical supports and services older adults need to stay independent in their homes."

Slated to participate in the discussion at the time of this release are Senator Kim LaSata, State Rep Brad Paquette, State Rep Steve Carra, and Representative Beth Griffin. Other invited legislators include Representative Pauline Wendzel and Senator Aric Nesbitt.

Senior Action Week continues after the tri-county Legislative Forum with featured daily policy topics aimed to raise statewide awareness around policy priorities of importance for area seniors.

2900 Lakeview Avenue  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
(269) 983-0177 office  
(800) 654-2810 Info-Line  
[www.areaagencyonaging.org](http://www.areaagencyonaging.org)



Everyone interested in state policy issues impacting older adults is encouraged to attend. You can register for the event or find more information at [www.AreaAgencyonAging.org/Advocacy](http://www.AreaAgencyonAging.org/Advocacy).

Older Michiganians Day is part of a state effort by the aging network consisting of sixteen area agencies on aging and more than 1,300 service providers that directly deliver an array of supports and services to more than 250,000 seniors and persons with disabilities annually. For more information and resources visit [www.AreaAgencyonAging.org/Advocacy](http://www.AreaAgencyonAging.org/Advocacy).

###

2900 Lakeview Avenue  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
(269) 983-0177 office  
(800) 654-2810 Info-Line  
[www.areaagencyonaging.org](http://www.areaagencyonaging.org)